A HISTORY

OF

OUR OWN TIMES

FROM THE

ACCESSION OF QUEEN VICTORIA

TO THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1880

BY

JUSTIN McCARTHY, M.P.

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IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1880.

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CHAPTER XLV.

PALMERSTON'S LAST VICTORY.

During the later months of his life the Prince Consort had been busy in preparing for another great International Exhibition to be held in London. It was arranged that this Exhibition should open on May 1, 1862; and although the sudden death of the Prince Consort greatly interfered with the prospects of the undertaking, it was not thought right that there should be any postponement of the opening. The Exhibition building was erected in South Kensington, according to a design by Captain Fowke. It certainly was not a beautiful structure. None of the novel charm which attached to the bright exterior of the Crystal Palace could be found in the South Kensington building. It was a huge and solid erection of brick, with two enormous domes, each in shape so strikingly like the famous crinoline petticoat of the period that people amused themselves by suggesting that the principal idea of the architect was to perpetuate for posterity the shape and structure of the Empress Eugenie's invention. The Fine Arts department of the Exhibition was

a splendid collection of pictures and statues. The displa of products of all kinds from the Colonies was rich, and wa a novelty, for the colonists contributed little indeed to th Exhibition of 1851; and the intervening eleven years ha been a period of immense colonial advance. But the publi did not enter with much heart into the enterprise of 1862 No one felt any longer any of the hopes which floate dreamily and gracefully round the scheme of 1851. Ther was no talk or thought of a reign of peace any more. Th Civil War was raging in America. The Continent of Europ was trembling all over with the spasms of war just done and the premonitory symptoms of war to come. The Ex hibition of 1862 had to rely upon its intrinsic merits, lik any ordinary show or any public market. Poetry and pro phecy had nothing to say to it.

England was left for some time to an almost absolut inactivity. As regards measures of political legislation after the failure of the Reform Bill, it was quite understood as we have already said, that there was to be no more o Reform while Lord Palmerston lived. At one of his election for Tiverton, Lord Palmerston was attacked by a familia antagonist, a sturdy Radical butcher, and asked to explai why he did not bring in another Reform Bill. The answe was characteristic. "Why do we not bring in anothe Reform Bill? Because we are not geese." Lord Palmerstor was heartily glad to be rid of schemes in which he hac neither belief or sympathy; and his absence of politica foresight in home affairs made him satisfied that the whol question of Reform was quietly shelved for another genera tion. It is not, perhaps, surprising that a busy statesman whose intellect was mostly exercised on questions of foreig policy, should have come to this conclusion, when coo critics on public affairs were ready to adopt with com

placency a similar faith. The *Quarterly Review* said, in 1863, "Reform is no longer talked of now. Mr. Bright has almost ceased to excite antipathy." "Our statesmen," it went on to say with portentous gravity, "have awakened to the fact that the imagined Reform agitation was nothing but an intrigue among themselves, and that the nation was far too sensible to desire any further approximation to the government of the multitude." Lord Palmerston was free to indulge in his taste for foreign politics.

Between Palmerston and the Radical party in England there was a growing coldness. He had not only thrown over Reform himself, but he had apparently induced most of his colleagues to accept the understanding that nothing more was to be said about it. He had gone in for a policy of large expenditure for the purpose of securing the country against the possibilities of invasion. He had lent himself openly to the propagation of what his adversaries called, not very unreasonably, the scare that was got up about another Napoleonic invasion. When drawn into argument by Mr. Cobden on the subject, Lord Palmerston had betrayed a warmth of manner that was almost offensive, and had spoken of the commercial treaty with France as if it were a thing rather ridiculous than otherwise. He was unsparing whenever he had a chance in his ridicule of the ballot. He had very little sympathy with the grievances of the Nonconformists, some of them even still real and substantial enough. He took no manner of interest in anything proposed for the political benefit of Ireland. Although an Irish landlord, an Irish peer, and occasionally speaking of himself in a half jocular way as an Irishman, he could not be brought even to affect any sympathy with any of the complaints made by the representatives of that country. He scoffed at all proposals about tenant-right. "Tenant-right,"

he once said, "is landlord's wrong;" and he was cheered for saying this by the landlords on both sides of the House of Commons; and he evidently thought he had settled the question. He was indeed impatient of all "views;" and he regarded what is called philosophic statesmanship with absolute contempt. The truth is that Palmerston ceased to be a statesman the moment he came to deal with domestic interests. When actually in the Home Office, and compelled to turn his attention to the business of that department, he proved a very efficient administrator, because of his shrewdness and his energy. But as a rule he had not much to do with English political affairs, and he knew little or nothing of them. He was even childishly ignorant of many things which any ordinary public man is supposed to know. He was at home in foreign—that is, in Continental politics; for he had hardly any knowledge of American affairs, and almost up to the moment of the fall of Richmond was confident that the Union never could be restored, and that separation was the easy and natural way of settling all the dispute. He gave a pension to an absurd and obscure writer of doggrel, and when a question was raised about this singular piece of patronage in the House of Commons, it turned out that Lord Palmerston knew nothing about the man, but had got it into his head somehow that he was a poet of the class of Burns. When he read anything except despatches he read scientific treatises, for he had a keen interest in some branches of science; but he cared little for modern English literature. The world in which he delighted to mingle talked of Continental politics generally, and a great knowledge of English domestic affairs would have been thrown away there. Naturally, therefore, when Lord Palmerston had nothing particular to do in foreign affairs, and had to turn his attention to England, he relished the

idea of fortifying her against foreign foes. This was foreign politics seen from another point of view; it had far more interest for him than reform or tenant-right.

There were, however, some evidences of a certain difference of opinion between Lord Palmerston and some of his colleagues, as well as between him and the Radical party. His constant activity in foreign politics pleased some of his Cabinet as little as it pleased the advanced Liberals. His vast fortification schemes and his willingness to spend money on any project that tended towards war, or, what seemed much the same thing, on any elaborate preparation against problematical war, was not congenial with the temperament and the judgment of some members of his administration. Lord Palmerston acted sincerely on the opinion which he expressed in a short letter to Mr. Cobden, that "man is a fighting and quarrelling animal." Assuming it to be the nature of man to fight and quarrel, he could see no better business for English statesmanship than to keep this country always in a condition to resist a possible attack from somebody. He differed almost radically on this point from two at least of his more important colleagues, Mr. Gladstone and Sir George Cornewall Lewis. Mr. Evelyn Ashley, in his "Life of Lord Palmerston," has published some interesting letters that passed between Palmerston and these statesmen on this general subject. Palmerston wrote to Sir George Lewis on November 22, 1860, arguing against something Lewis had said, and which Palmerston hopes "was only a conversational paradox, and not a deliberately adopted theory." This was a dissent on the part of Lewis from the maxim, that in statesmanship prevention is better than cure. Each had clearly in his mind the prevention which would take security against the perils of war; Lord Palmerston therefore goes on at once in his

letter to show that in many cases the timely adoption o spirited measures by an English Government would have actually prevented war. Lewis argues that "if an evil is certain and proximate, and can be averted by diplomacy then undoubtedly prevention is better than cure;" but tha "if the evil is remote and uncertain, then I think it better not to resort to preventive measures, which insure a proximate and certain mischief." The purpose of the discussion is made more clear in Lewis's concluding sentence: "I seems to me that our foreign relations are on too vast a scale to render it wise for us to insure systematically against all risks; and if we do not insure systematically we do nothing." On April 29, 1862, Lord Palmerston writes to Mr Gladstone about a speech that the latter had just been making in Manchester, and in which, as Lord Palmerston puts it, Mr. Gladstone seems "to make it a reproach to the nation at large that it has forced, as you say it has, on the Parliament and the Government the high amount of expenditure which we have at present to provide for." Palmerston does not "quite agree" with Mr. Gladstone "as to the fact;" "but admitting it to be as you state, it seems to me to be rather a proof of the superior sagacity of the nation than a subject for reproach." Lord Palmerston goes on to argue that the country, so far from having, as Cobden had accused it of doing, "rushed headlong into extravagance under the influence of panic," had simply awakened from a lethargy, got rid of "an apathetic blindness on the part of the governed and the governors as to the defensive means of the country compared with the offensive means acquired and acquiring by other Powers." "We have on the other side of the Channel a people who, say what they may, hate us as a nation from the bottom of their hearts and would make any sacrifice to inflict a deep humiliation

upon England. It is natural that this should be so. They are eminently vain, and their passion is glory in war. They cannot forget or forgive Aboukir, Trafalgar, the Peninsula, Waterloo, and St. Helena.... Well then at the head of this neighbouring nation, who would like nothing so well as a retaliatory blow upon England, we see an able, active, wary, counsel-keeping but ever-planning sovereign; and we see this sovereign organising an army which, including his reserve, is more than six times greater in amount than the whole of our regular forces in our two islands, and at the same time labouring hard to create a navy equal, if not superior, to ours. Give him a cause of quarrel, which any foreign Power may at any time invent or create, if so minded; give him the command of the Channel, which permanent or accidental naval superiority might afford him, and then calculate if you can—for it would pass my reckoning power to do so—the disastrous consequences to the British nation which a landing of an army of from one to two hundred thousand men would bring with it. Surely even a large yearly expenditure for army and navy is an economical insurance against such a catastrophe." The reader will perhaps be reminded of one of the most effective arguments of Demosthenes. Consider, he says, what even a few days of the occupation of the country by a foreign enemy would mean, and then say whether as a mere matter of economy it would not be better to spend a good deal of the resources we have in striving to avert such a calamity. There is a great difference, however, in the purpose and the application of the two arguments. Demosthenes puts the case in a way that is from its point of view perfect. He is speaking of a danger that lies at the gates; of an enemy who must be encountered one way or another; and he is pleading for instant and offensive war. It is a very

different thing to argue for enormous expenditure on the ground that somebody who is now professing the most peaceful intentions may possibly one day become your enemy, and try to attack you. In such a case, the first thing to be considered is whether the danger is real and likely to be imminent, or whether it is merely speculative. Even against speculative dangers a wise people will always take precautions; but it is no part of wisdom to spend in guarding against such perils as much as would be needed to enable us actually to speak with the enemy at the gate. It is a question of proportion and comparison. As Sir George Lewis argues, it is not possible for a nation like England to secure herself against all speculative dangers. France might invade us from Boulogne or Cherbourg, no doubt. But the United States might at the same time assail us in Canada. Russia might attack, as she once thought of doing, our Australian possessions, or make an onslaught upon us in Asia. Germany might be in alliance with Russia; Austria might at the same time be in alliance with France. These are all possibilities; they might all come to pass at one and the same time. But how could any State keep fleets and armies capable of ensuring her against serious peril from such a combination? It would be better to make up our minds to wait until the assault really threatened, and then fight it out the best way we could. Lord Palmerston seemed to forget that in the campaign against Russia it did not prove easy for France to send out an army very much smaller than his "one or two hundred thousand men;" and that Louis Napoleon was glad to finish up prematurely his campaign in Lombardy, even though he had won in every battle. He had also made the mistake of assuming that all these military and naval insurances must insure. If he had lived to 1870 he would have seen that a Sovereign may

engage himself for years in the preparing of an immense armament, that it may be the armament of a people "eminently vain" and whose "passion is glory in war;" and yet that the armament may turn out a vast failure, and may prove at the hour of need a defence like Rodomonte's bridge in Ariosto, which only conducts its owner to ignominious upset and fall. All the resources of France were strained for years, and by one who could do as he pleased, for the single purpose of creating a great overmastering army; and when the time came to test the army, it proved to be little better than what Prince Bismarck called "a crowd of fighting persons." This is surely a matter to be taken account of when we are thinking of going to vast annual expense for the purpose of maintaining a great armament. We may go to all the expense, and yet not have the armament when we fancy we have need for it. That, Lord Palmerston would doubtless have said, is a risk we must run. Mr. Gladstone and Sir George Lewis would no doubt have thought problematic invasion a risk more safe to run. That had been the view of Sir Robert Peel.

Whatever may be thought of the merits of the argument on either side—and the decision will be made more often probably by temperament than by reasoning—the controversy will serve to illustrate the sort of difference that was gradually growing up between Lord Palmerston and some of his own colleagues. Lord Palmerston had of late fallen again into a policy of suspicion and distrust as regards France. We are convinced that he was perfectly sincere; and, as has been said already in these pages, we do not think there was any inconsistency in his conduct. He had for a long time believed in the good faith of the Emperor of the French; but the policy of the Lombardy campaign, and the consequent annexation of Savoy and Nice, had

come on him as a complete surprise, and when he found that his friend Louis Napoleon could keep such secrets from him, he possibly came to the conclusion that he could keep others still more important. Lord Palmerston made England his idol. He loved her in a Pagan way. He did not much care for abstract justice where she was concerned. He was unscrupulous where he believed her interests were to be guarded. Nor had he any other than a purely Pagan view of her interests. It did not seem to have occurred to him that England's truest interest would be to do justice to herself and to other States; to be what Voltaire's Brahmin boasts of being, a good parent and a faithful friend, maintaining well her own children and endeavouring for peace among her neighbours. Palmerston's idea was that England should hold the commanding place among European States, and that none should even seem to be in a position to do her scathe.

Lord Palmerston's taste for foreign affairs had now ample means of gratification. England had some small troubles of her own to deal with. A serious insurrection sprang up in New Zealand. The tribe of the Waikatos, living near Auckland in the Northern Island, began a movement against the colonists, and this became before long a general rebellion of the Maori natives. The Maoris are a remarkably intelligent race, and are skilful in war as well as in peace. Not long before this the Governor of the colony, Sir George Grey, had written in the warmest praise of their industrial capabilities and their longing for mental improvement. They had a certain literary art among them; they could all, or nearly all, read and write; many of them were eloquent and could display considerable diplomatic skill. They fought so well in this instance that the British troops actually suffered a somewhat serious repulse in endeavour-

ing to take one of the Maori palisado-fortified villages. In the end, however, they were of course defeated. The quarrel was a survival of a long-standing dispute between the colonists and the natives about land. It was, in fact, the old story: the colonists eager to increase their stock of land, and the natives jealous to guard their quickly vanishing possession. The events led to grave discussion in Parliament. The Legislature of New Zealand passed enactments confiscating some nine million acres of the native lands and giving the Colonial Government something like absolute and arbitrary power of arrest and imprisonment. The Government at home proposed to help the colonists by a guarantee to raise a loan of one million to cover the expenses of the war, or the colonial share of them, and this proposal was keenly discussed in the House of Commons. It was on this occasion that Mr. Roebuck laid down a philosophical theory which gave a good deal of offence to sensitive people; the theory that where "the brown man" and the white meet, the brown man is destined to disappear. The doctrine is questionable enough, even as a theory. No doubt the brown man is destined to disappear if the white man, with his better weapons and greater cleverness and resources, makes it his business to extirpate him; and it was justly pointed out that whatever Mr. Roebuck may have personally meant by his theory, its inculcation at such a moment could only tend to strengthen this idea in the minds of some colonists who were already only too willing to entertain it. But until the brown man has had full fairplay somewhere alongside of the white man, it is rash to come to any distinct conclusions as to his ultimate destiny. Mr. Roebuck always loved theories neatly cut and sharpened. He gave them out with a precision which lent them an appearance of power and of authority; they seemed to argue

a mind that had "swallowed formulas," as Mr. Carlyle puts it, and was above the cant of humanitarianism. But such theories are more satisfactorily broached and discussed in scientific societies than in Parliamentary debate. The ultimate destiny of the brown man did not particularly help the House of Commons to any conclusions concerning the New Zealand insurrection, because even Mr. Roebuck did not put forward his theory as an argument to prove that in every controversy we were bound to take the side of the white man and assist him in his predestined business of extinguishing his brown rival. The Government passed their Guarantee Bill, not without many a protest from both sides of the House that colonists who readily engaged in quarrels with natives must some time or other be prepared to bear the expenses entailed by their own policy.

Trouble, too, arose on the Gold Coast of Africa. Some slaves of the King of Ashantee had taken refuge in British territory; the Governor of Cape Coast Colony would not give them up; and in the spring of 1863 the King made threatening demonstrations, invading the territories of neighbouring chiefs, destroying many of their villages, and approaching within forty miles of our frontier. The Governor, assuming that the settlement was about to be invaded by the Ashantees, took it upon him to anticipate the movement by sending an expedition into the territory of the King. He ordered troops to be moved for the purpose; the season was badly chosen; the climate was pestilential; even the black troops from the West Indies could not endure it and began to die like flies. The ill-advised undertaking had to be given up; and the Government at home only escaped a vote of censure by a narrow majority of seven. 226 members supported Sir John Hay's resolution

declaring that the movement was rash and impolitic, and 233 sustained the action of the Government. Much discussion, too, was aroused by occurrences in Japan. A British subject, Mr. Richardson, was murdered in the English settlement of Japan and on an open road made free to Englishmen by treaty. This was in September 1862. The murder was committed by some of the followers of Prince Satsuma, one of the powerful feudal princes, who then practically divided the authority of Japan with the regular Government. Reparation was demanded both from the Japanese Government and from Prince Satsuma; the Government paid the sum demanded of them, 100,000*l.*, and made an apology. Prince Satsuma was called on to pay 25,000*l.* and to see that the murderers were brought to punishment, the crime having been committed within his jurisdiction. Satsuma did nothing, and in 1863 Colonel Neale, the English *Chargé d'Affaires* in Japan, called upon Admiral Kuper to go with the English fleet to Kagosima, Satsuma's capital, and demand satisfaction. Admiral Kuper entered the bay on August 11, 1863, and after waiting for a day or two proceeded to seize on some steamers. The Kagosima Forts opened fire on him, and he then bombarded the town and laid the greater portion of it in ashes. The town, it seemed, was built for the most part of wood; it caught fire in the bombardment and was destroyed. Fortunately the non-combatant inhabitants, the women and children, had had time to get out of Kagosima, and the destruction of life was not great. The whole transaction was severely condemned by many Englishmen who did not belong to the ranks of those professed philanthropists whom it is sometimes the fashion to denounce in England as if humanity and patriotism were irreconcilable qualities, and as if a true Englishman ought to have no consideration for the suffer-

ings and the blood of Japanese and Maoris and people of that sort. The House of Commons, however, sustained the Government by a large majority. The Government, it should be said, did not profess to justify the destruction of Kagosima. Their case was that Admiral Kuper had to do something; that there was nothing he could very well do when he had been fired upon but to bombard the town; and that the burning of the town was an accident of the conflict for which neither he nor they could be held responsible. Satsuma finally submitted and paid the money, and promised justice. But there were more murders and more bombardings yet before we came to anything like an abiding settlement with Japan; and Japan itself was not far off a Revolution, the most sudden, organic, and to all appearance complete that has ever yet been seen in the history of nations.

In the meantime, however, our Government became involved in liabilities more perilous than any disputes in eastern or southern islands could bring on them. An insurrection of a very serious kind broke out in Poland. It was provoked by the Strafford-like thoroughness of the policy adopted by the Russian authorities. It was well known to the Russian Government that a secret political agitation was going on in Poland, and it was determined to anticipate matters and choke off the patriotic movement by taking advantage of the periodical conscription to press into the military ranks all the young men in the cities who could by any possibility be supposed to have any sympathy with it. The attempt to execute this resolve was the occasion for the outbreak of an insurrection which at one time showed something like a claim to success. The young men who could escape fled to the woods, and there formed themselves into armed bands, which gave the Russians great

trouble. The rebels could disperse and come together with such ease and rapidity that it was very difficult indeed to get any real advantage over them. The frontier of Austrian-Poland was very near, and the insurgents could cross it, escape from the Russian troops, and recross it when they pleased to resume their harassing operations. Austria was not by any means so unfriendly to the Polish patriots as both Russia and Prussia were. Austria had come unwillingly into the scheme for the partition of Poland, and had got little profit by it; and it was well understood that if the other Powers concerned could see their way to the restoration of Polish nationality, Austria, for her part, would make no objection. The insurgents counted with some confidence on the passive attitude of the Austrian authorities, and the positive sympathy of many officers and soldiers in the Austrian army. They converted the Austrian frontier for a while into a military basis of operations against Russia. To some extent the same thing was attempted on the Prussian frontier, too; but Prussia was still very much under the dominion of Russia, and was prevailed upon or coerced to execute an odious convention with Russia, by virtue of which the Russian troops were allowed to follow Polish insurgents into Prussian territory. This convention created a strong feeling against Prussia through the whole of Western Europe, and for a while made her much more an object of general dislike than even Russia herself.

It was plain from the first that the Poles could not under the most favourable circumstances hold out long against Russia by virtue of their own strength. It was evident that wherever the insurrection could be got into a corner Russia could crush it with ease. Nevertheless, the plans of the Poles were not so imprudent as they seemed. On the contrary, they had a certain chance of success. The idea,

whether clearly and definitely expressed or not, was to keep the insurrection up, by any means and at any risk, until some of the great European Powers should be induced to interfere. The insurrection was a great drama; a piece of deliberate stage-play. We do not say this in any spirit of disparagement; the stage-play was got up by patriots with a true and noble purpose, and it was the only statesmanlike policy left to the Poles. Let us keep it up long enough—such was the conviction of the Polish leaders—and Western Europe must intervene. Despite the lesson of subsequent events, the Poles were well justified in their political calculations. Their hopes were at one time on the very eve of being realised. The Emperor Napoleon was eager to move to their aid, and Lord Russell was hardly less eager.

The Polish cause was very popular in England. It had been the political first love of many a man, who now felt his youthful ardour glow again as he read of the gallant struggle made in the forests of Poland. Russia was hated; Prussia was now hated even more. There was no question of party feeling about the sympathy with Poland. There were about as many Conservatives as Radicals who were ready to favour the idea of some effort being made in her behalf. Lord Ellenborough spoke up for Poland in the House of Lords with poetic and impassioned eloquence. Lord Shaftesbury from the opposite benches denounced the conduct of Russia. The Irish Catholic was as ardent for Polish liberty as the London artizan. Among its most conspicuous and energetic advocates in England were Mr. Pope Hennessy, a Catholic and Irish member of Parliament; and Mr. Edmond Beales, the leader of a great Radical organisation in London. The question was raised in Parliament by Mr. Hennessy, and aroused much sympathy there. Great

public meetings were held, at which Russia was denounced and Poland advocated, not merely by popular orators, but by men of high rank and grave responsibility. War was not openly called for at those meetings, or in the House of Commons; but it was urged that England, as one of the Powers which had signed the Treaty of Vienna, should join with other States in summoning Russia to recognise the rights, such as they were, which had been secured to Poland by virtue of that treaty. In France the greatest enthusiasm prevailed for the cause of Poland. The eloquent pen of Montalembert pleaded for the "nation in mourning." Prince Napoleon spoke with singular eloquence and impressiveness in the French Senate on the justice and the necessity of intervention. The same cause was pleaded by Count Walewski, himself the son of a Polish lady. The Emperor Napoleon required little pressing. He was ready for intervention if he could get England to join him. Lord Russell went so far as to draw up and despatch to Russia, in concert with France and Austria, a note on the subject of Poland. It urged on the attention of the Russian Government six points, as the outline of a system of pacification for Poland. These were:—a complete amnesty; a national representation; a distinct national administration of Poles for the kingdom of Poland; full liberty of conscience, with the repeal of all the restrictions imposed on Catholic worship; the recognition of the Polish language as official; the establishment of a regular system of recruiting. There was an almost universal impression at one moment that in the event of Russia declining to accept these recommendations, England, Austria, and France would make war to compel her. There was hardly any party in England absolutely opposed to the idea of intervention, except the Manchester School of Radicals. Some of these were consistently op-

posed to intervention in any foreign cause whatever. Others had an added impression that Poland had managed her national affairs very badly when she had a chance of managing them for herself, and that therefore there was little use in trying to set her on her feet again. Such opposition would, however, have counted for even less than it did at the time of the Crimean War, if the Government had resolved on going in with France and striking a blow for Poland.

Looking back now calmly on the events of that day, and those which followed them, it does not seem that such a policy would have been unwise. There was much in the claims of Poland which deserved the sympathy of every lover of liberty and believer in the development of civilisation. If this were the time or place for such a discussion, it would not be difficult to show that the faults found with Poland's old system of government had nothing to do with the condition of the present; and that a new Poland would no more be likely to fall into the errors of the past, than a new Irish Parliament would be likely to refuse the right of representation to Catholics. There would assuredly have been a distinct advantage to the stability of European affairs in the resuscitation of Poland as a distinct and independent part of the Russian State system, even if she were not to be a wholly independent nation once again. This probably could not have been done without war; but it seems more than merely probable that that war would have averted the necessity for many other wars which have since been fought out with less profitable result to European stability. Whether the English alarms about the aggressive designs of Russia be founded or unfounded, the legislative independence of Poland would have made it superfluous to take much thought concerning them. The new Poland would undoubtedly have

been a State with representative institutions; and set in the midst of Russia and of Prussia, her example could hardly have been without a contagious influence of a very salutary kind on each.

It soon became known, however, that there was to be no intervention. Lord Palmerston put a stop to the whole idea. It was not that he sympathised with Russia. On the contrary, he wrote a letter to Baron Brunnow, the Russian Ambassador, on February 4, 1863, in which he bluntly told him that he regarded the Polish insurrection as the just punishment inflicted by Heaven on Russia for Russia's having done so much to stir up revolution in the dominions of some of her neighbours. But Lord Palmerston had by this time grown into as profound a distrust of the Emperor Napoleon as any representative of the social and democratic Republic could possibly entertain. He was convinced that the Emperor was stirring in the matter chiefly with the hope of getting an opportunity of establishing himself in the Rhine provinces of Prussia, on the pretext of compelling Prussia to remain neutral in the struggle, or of punishing her if she took the side of Russia. Probably Lord Palmerston was mistaken in this instance. It is not likely that Louis Napoleon ever cared for any war project or annexation scheme except with the view of making his dynasty popular in France; and he may well have thought that the emancipation of Poland would gain him popularity enough to enable him to dispense with other contrivances for the remainder of his reign. However that may be, Lord Palmerston was firm. He described a proposal of the Emperor for an identical note to be addressed to Prussia on the subject of the convention with Russia as a trap laid for England to fall into; and he would have nothing to do with it. After a while it became known that England had decided not to

join in any project for armed intervention; and from that moment Russia became merely contemptuous. The Emperor of the French would not and could not take action single-handed; and Prince Gortschakoff politely told Lord Russell that England had really better mind her own business and not encourage movements in Poland which were simply the work of "cosmopolitan revolution." Lord Russell had spoken of the responsibility which the Emperor of Russia was incurring; and Prince Gortschakoff drily replied that the Emperor knew all about that and was quite prepared to accept any responsibility. It used to be said at the time that Prince Gortschakoff gently intimated in diplomatic conversation that if the English Government were inclined to occupy themselves in redressing the grievances of injured nationalities they would find in Ireland a legitimate and sufficient object for the exercise of their reforming energies. It is certain that England received a snub, and that Prince Gortschakoff intended his reply to be thus accepted by England and thus interpreted by Europe.

After this Austria found it necessary to secure her frontier line more carefully and not allow it to be made any longer a basis of operations against Russia. The insurrection was flung wholly on its own resources. It was kept up gallantly and desperately for a time; but the end was certain. The Russians carried out their measures of pacification with unflinching hand. Floggings and shootings and hangings were in full vigour. The Russian authorities recognised the equal rights of women by administering the scourge and the rope and the bullet to them as well as to men. Droves of prisoners were sent to Siberia. New steps were taken for denationalising the country and effecting its moral as well as physical subjugation. After a time the words of Marshal Sebastiani's famous announcement in 1831

became applicable once more, and order reigned in Warsaw. The intervention of England had done much the same service for Poland that the interposition of Don Quixote did for the boy whose master was flogging him. There was, to be sure, a certain difference in the conditions. Don Quixote did intervene practically; and while he remained in sight the master pretended to be forgiving and merciful. It was only when the hero had ridden away that the master grimly tied up the boy again and flogged him worse than ever. In the case of England there was no such show of forbearance. The sufferer was tied up under our very eyes and scourged again, and more fiercely, for the express reason that England had ventured to interfere with an unmeaning and ineffectual remonstrance. We have spoken of that school of Liberals who would not have intervened at all on behalf of Poland or any other nation. Many, perhaps most, persons will refuse to accept their principle. But we can hardly believe there is anyone who will not admit that such a course of policy is wise, manly, and dignified when compared with that which intrudes its intervention just far enough to irritate the oppressor and not far enough to be of the slightest benefit to the oppressed.

The effect of the policy pursued by England in this case was to bring about a certain coldness between the Emperor Napoleon and the English Government. This fact was made apparent some little time after when the dispute between Denmark and the Germanic Confederation came up in relation to the Schleswig-Holstein succession. We need not go very deeply now into the historical bearings of this dispute which long tormented philologists, jurisconsults and archæologists as well as statesmen. An irreverent Frenchman once declared that the heavens and the earth shall pass away, but the Schleswig-Holstein question shall not

pass away. Practically, however, the Schleswig-Holstein question would seem to have passed away so far as our times are concerned. It was in substance a question of the right of nationalities combined of later years with a dispute of succession. Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg were duchies attached to Denmark. Holstein and Lauenburg were purely German in nationality and only held by the King of Denmark as Duke of Holstein and Lauenburg on much the same tenure as that by virtue of which our kings so long held Hanover. The King of Denmark sat as Duke of Holstein and Lauenburg in the old Germanic Diet which used to hold its meetings in Frankfort, the Diet of the Germanic Confederation which was abolished by the Prussian victory at Sadowa, and which Talleyrand once with grave sarcasm urged not to be precipitate in its decisions. Schleswig was attached more directly to the Danish Crown; but a large proportion of the population, much the larger proportion in the southern districts, were German, and there had long been an agitation going on in Germany about the claims and the rights of Schleswig. One of the claims was that Schleswig and Holstein should be united into one administrative system, and should be governed independently of the kingdom of Denmark, the King of Denmark to be the ruler of this state as the Emperor of Austria is King of Hungary. There can be no doubt that the heart of the German people was deeply interested in the condition of the Schleswigers and Holsteiners. It was only natural that a great people should have been unwilling to see so many of their countrymen, on the very edge of Germany itself, kept under the rule of the Danish King. The tendency of Denmark always was towards an amalgamation of the duchies into her own state system. The tendency of the Germans was to regard with extreme jealousy any move-

ment that way, to descry evil purpose in even harmless innovations on the part of Denmark, and to make constant complaint about the tampering of the Danish authorities with the tongue and the rights of the Teutonic populations. In truth the claims of Germany and Denmark were irreconcilable. Put into plain words the dispute was between Denmark which wanted to make the duchies Danish, and Germany which wanted to have them German. The arrangement which bound them up with Denmark was purely diplomatic and artificial. Anyone who would look realities in the face must have seen that some day or other the Germans would carry their point, and that the principle of nationalities would have its way in that case as it had done in so many others.

Suddenly the whole dispute became complicated with a question of succession. The King of Denmark, Frederick VII., died in November 1863, and was succeeded by Christian IX. Prince Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, claimed the succession to the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. The late King of Denmark had no direct heir to succeed him, and the succession had been arranged in 1852 by the Great Powers of Europe. The Treaty of London then settled it on Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glucksburg, the father of the Princess of Wales. The settlement, however, was brought about by persuading the Duke of Augustenburg, Prince Frederick's father, heir of Holstein and claimant of Schleswig, to renounce his rights, and now Prince Frederick, the son, disputed in his own case the validity of the renunciation. The previous pretensions of Denmark to encroach on the rights of the German populations in the Duchies, had roused an angry feeling in Germany, and German statesmen were willing to take advantage of any claim and

any claimant to dispute the succession of the King of Denmark so far as the Duchies were concerned. The affairs of Prussia were now in the hands of a strong man; one of the strongest men modern times have known. Daring, unscrupulous, and crafty as Cavour, Von Bismarck was even already able to wield a power which had never been within Cavour's reach. The public intelligence of Europe had not yet recognized the marvellous combination of qualities which was destined to make their owner famous, and to prove a dissolving force in the settled systems of Germany, and indeed of the whole European continent. As yet the general opinion of the world set down Herr von Bismarck as simply a fanatical reactionary, a coarse sort of Metternich, a combination of bully and buffoon. The Schleswig-Holstein Question became, however, a very serious one for Denmark when it was taken up by Von Bismarck. There does not seem the slightest reason to suppose that Bismarck ever had any idea of maintaining the pretensions of the Prince of Augustenburg. Bismarck had always ridiculed them without any affectation of concealment. From first to last the mind of Bismarck was evidently made up that the Duchies should be annexed to Prussia. But for the time the claims of the Augustenburg Prince came in conveniently, and Prussia put on the appearance of giving them her sanction and support. The result of all this was that the Germanic Diet and the King of Denmark could not come to any terms of arrangement; and—to cut preliminaries short and get to what strictly concerns our history—war became certain. The Germanic Diet entrusted the conduct of the war to the hands of Austria and Prussia, who entered into joint agreements for the purpose. The German troops entered, first, Holstein, which under the command of the Diet they had a legal right to do, and then Schleswig, and war began.

Denmark, one of the smallest and weakest kingdoms in the world, found herself engaged in conflict with Austria and Prussia combined. The little Danish David had defied two Goliaths to combat at one moment.

Were the Danes and their Sovereign and their Government mad? Not at all. They well knew that they could not hold out alone against the two German Great Powers. But they counted on the help of Europe. Especially they counted on the help of England. For a long time they had got it into their heads that England was pledged to defend them against any assault from the side of Germany. Lord Russell in multitudinous despatches had very often given the Danish Government sound and sensible advice. He had constantly admonished them that they must for their own sakes deal fairly with the German populations. He had urgently recommended them to leave to the Germans and the German Governments no fair ground for complaint. He had never countenanced or encouraged any of the acts which tended to the enforced absorption of German populations into a Danish system. He had on the contrary more than once somewhat harshly rebuked the Danish Government for neglect or breach of engagements, and sternly pointed out the certain consequences of such a policy. But he had at the same time implied that if Denmark took the advice of England, England would not see her wronged. He had at all events declared, that if Denmark did not follow England's advice England would not come to her assistance in case she were attacked by the Germans. Denmark interpreted this as an assurance that if she followed England's counsels she might count on England's protection, and she insisted that she had strictly followed England's counsels for this very reason. When the struggle seemed approaching, Lord Palmerston said some words in

the House of Commons at the close of a session, which seemed to convey a distinct assurance that England would defend Denmark in case she should be attacked by the German Powers. On July 23, 1863, he was questioned with reference to the course England intended to pursue in the event of the German Powers pressing too hardly on Denmark, and he then said: "We are convinced—I am convinced at least—that if any violent attempt were made to overthrow the rights and interfere with the independence of Denmark, those who made the attempt would find in the result that it would not be Denmark alone with which they would have to contend." These words were afterwards explained as intended to be merely prophetic, and to indicate Lord Palmerston's private belief that in the event of Denmark being invaded, France, or Russia, or some State somewhere, would probably be generous enough to come to the assistance of the Danes. But when the words were spoken, it did not occur to the mind of anyone to interpret them in such a sense. The part of Lord Palmerston's speech which contained them was dealing distinctly and exclusively with the policy of England. It was not supposed that an English Minister could expect to satisfy the House of Commons by merely giving a specimen of his skill in forecasting the probable policy of other States. Everyone believed that Lord Palmerston was answering on behalf of the English Government and the English people.

The Danes counted with confidence on the help of England. They refused to accept the terms which Germany would have imposed. They prepared for war. Public opinion in England was all but unanimous in favour of Denmark. Five out of every six persons were for England's drawing the sword in her cause at once. Five out of every six of the small minority who were against war, were

nevertheless in sympathy with the Danes. Many reasons combined to bring about this condition of national feeling. In the first instance very few people knew anything whatever of the merits of the controversy. Even professed politicians hardly understood the question. The general impression was, that it was purely the case of two strong Powers oppressing in wanton and wicked combination a weak but gallant people. Austria was not popular in England; Prussia was detested. Many Englishmen were angry with her because her Government had made the convention with Russia which has already been mentioned, and because she had a reactionary Minister and a half-despotic King. A large number of persons did not like the Germans they met in the City and in business generally. Some had disagreeable reminiscences of their travels in Prussia, and had been unfavourably impressed by the police systems of Berlin. Moreover it was then an article of faith with most Englishmen that Prussians were miserable fellows who could only smoke and drink beer, and who being unable to fight with any decent adversary, were trying to get a warlike reputation by attacking a very weak Power. *Punch* had a cartoon representing the conventional English soldier and sailor regarding with looks of utter contempt an Austrian and a Prussian, and agreeing that Englishmen ought not to be called on to fight such fellows, but offering to kick them if it were thought desirable. In England at this time, military strength meant the army of the Emperor of the French, and political sagacity was represented by the wisdom of the same Sovereign.

A certain small number of persons in England sympathised with Denmark for another reason. The Prince of Wales had been married to the Princess Alexandra on March 10, 1863. The Princess Alexandra was, as it has

been already said, the daughter of the King of Denmark. She was not a Dane, except as we may, if we like, call the Emperor of Brazil a Brazilian. But her family had now come to rule in Denmark, and she became in that sense a Danish princess. Her youth, her beauty, her goodness, her sweet and winning ways, had made her more popular than any foreign princess ever before was known to be in England. It seemed even to some who ought to have had more judgment that the virtues and charms of the Princess Alexandra, and the fact that she was now Princess of Wales, supplied ample proof of the justice of the Danish cause, and of the duty of England to support it in arms. Not small, therefore, was the disappointment spread over the country when it was found that the Danes were left alone to their defence, and that England was not to put out a hand to help them.

Yet it was as impossible as it would have been absurd for England to maintain in arms the cause of Denmark. To begin with, the cause was not one which England could reasonably have supported. The artificial arrangements by which the Duchies were bound to Denmark could not endure. They were the device of an era and a system of policy from which England was escaping as fast as she could. It was not a controversy which specially concerned the English people. England was only one of the parties to the diplomatic arrangements which had bound up the Duchies and the Danish kingdom together. Lord Russell was willing at one moment to intervene by arms in support of Denmark if France would join with England, and he made a proposal of this kind to the French Government. The Emperor Napoleon refused to interfere. He had been hurt by England's refusal to join with him in sustaining Poland against Russia, and now was his time to make a

return. Besides, he had, after the attempt at diplomatic intervention between Poland and Russia, issued invitations for a Congress of European sovereigns to assemble in Paris and make a new settlement of Europe. The Governments to which the invitation was addressed had, for the most part, returned a civil acceptance, well knowing the project would come to nothing. Lord Russell refused to have anything to do with the Congress, and gave some excellent reasons for the refusal. The Emperor Napoleon was somewhat hurt by the chill common sense of Lord Russell's reply. The Emperor's invitation was evidently meant to be a document of historical and monumental interest. It was drawn up in the spirit of what Burke calls "a proud humility." It made allusion to the early misfortunes and exile of the writer, and put him forward as the one sovereign of Europe on whose face the winds of adversity had severely blown. It must have been painful to find that so much eloquence and emotion had been put into a State paper for nothing. The Emperor's turn had now come, and he would not join with England in sustaining the cause of Denmark. There was absolutely nothing for it but to leave the Danes to fight out their battle in the best way they could. Lord Palmerston put the matter very plainly in a letter to Lord Russell. "The truth is," he wrote, "that to enter into a military conflict with all Germany on Continental ground would be a serious undertaking. If Sweden and Denmark were actively co-operating with us, our 20,000 men might do a great deal; but Austria and Prussia could bring 200,000 or 300,000 into the field, and would be joined by the smaller German States." At a later period of the struggle Lord Palmerston spoke with full frankness to Count Apponyi, the Austrian Ambassador. He explained that the English Government had "abstained from taking the field

in defence of Denmark, for many reasons—from the season of the year, from the smallness of our army, and the great risk of failure in a struggle with all Germany by land." But Lord Palmerston pointed out that "with regard to operations by sea, the positions would be reversed. We are strong, Germany is weak; and the German ports in the Baltic, North Sea, and Adriatic, would be greatly at our command." Therefore Lord Palmerston warned the Austrian Ambassador that a collision between England and Austria might happen if an Austrian squadron were to enter the Baltic in order to help the operations against Denmark. The Austrian Ambassador explained that his Government did not intend to send a squadron into the Baltic. This was an unofficial conversation between Palmerston and Count Apponyi, and had no effect on the fortunes of the war or on the diplomacy that brought it to an end.

The Danes fought with a great deal of spirit; but they were extravagantly outnumbered, and their weapons were miserably unfit to contend against their powerful enemies. The Prussian needle-gun came into play with terrible effect in the campaign, and it soon made all attempts at resistance on the part of the Danes utterly hopeless. The Danes lost their ground and their fortresses. They won one little fight on the sea, defeating some Austrian vessels in the German Ocean off Heligoland. The news was received with wild enthusiasm in England. Its announcement in the House of Commons drew down the unwonted manifestation of a round of applause from the Strangers' Gallery. But the struggle had ceased to be anything like a serious campaign. The English Government kept up active negotiations on behalf of peace, and at length succeeded in inducing the belligerents to agree to a suspension of arms, in order that a conference of the Great Powers might be held in London. The con-

ference was called together. The populations of the Duchies about whom the whole dispute had taken place, were beginning now to suspect that their claims to independent existence would very probably be overlooked altogether, and that they were only about to be passed from one ruler to another. They sent a deputation to London, and claimed to be represented directly at the Conference. Their claim was rejected. They, the very people whose national existence was the question in dispute, were informed that diplomacy made no account of them. They had no right to a voice, or even to a hearing, in the councils which were to dispose of their destinies. The Saxon minister, Count Beust, who afterwards transferred his abilities and energies to the service of Austria, did the best he could for them, and acted so far as lay in his power as the representative of their claims; but they were not allowed any acknowledged representation at the Conference. The deliberations of the Conference came to nothing. Curiously enough the final rejection of all compromise came from the Danes. Whether they had still some lingering hope that by prolonging the war they could induce some Great Power to intervene on their behalf, or whether they were merely influenced by the doggedness of sheer desperation, we cannot pretend to know. But they proved suddenly obstinate; at the last hour they rejected a proposal which Lord Palmerston described as reasonable in itself, and the Conference came to an end. The war broke out again. The renewed hostilities lasted, however, but a short time. It was plain now even to the Danes themselves that they could not hold their ground alone, and that no one was coming to help them. The Danish Government sent Prince John of Denmark direct to Berlin to negotiate for peace—they had had enough, perhaps, of foreign diplomatic intervention—and terms of peace

were easily arranged. Nothing could be more simple. Denmark gave up everything she had been fighting for, and agreed to bear part of the expense which had been entailed upon the German Powers by the task of chastising her. The Duchies were surrendered to the disposal of the Allies, and nothing more was heard of the claims of the heir of Augustenburg. That claimant only got what is called in homely language the cold shoulder when he endeavoured to draw the attention of the Herr von Bismarck to his alleged right of succession. A new war was to settle the ownership of the Duchies, and some much graver questions of German interest at the same time.

It was obviously impossible that the conduct of the English Government should pass unchallenged. They were quite right, as it seems to us, in not intervening on behalf of Denmark; but they were not right in giving Denmark the least reason to believe that they ever would intervene in her behalf. It would have been a calamity if England had succeeded in persuading Louis Napoleon to join her in a war to enable Denmark to keep the Duchies; it could not be to the credit of England that her Ministers had invited Louis Napoleon to join them in such a policy and had been refused. We cannot see any way of defending Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell against some sort of censure for the part they had taken in this transaction. It would have been a discredit to England if she had become the means of coercing the Duchies into subjection to Denmark, supposing such a thing possible in the long run; but her Ministers could claim no credit for not having done so. They would have done it if they could. They had thus given Europe full evidence at once of their desire and their incapacity. Their political opponents could not be expected to overlook such a chance of attack. Accordingly, in the two Houses

of Parliament notices were given of a vote of censure on the Government. Lord Malmesbury, in Lord Derby's absence, proposed the resolution in the House of Lords, and it was carried by a majority of nine. The Government made little account of that; the Lords always had a Tory majority. As Lord Palmerston himself had put it on a former occasion, the Government knew when they took office that their opponents had a larger pack of cards in the Lords than they had, and that whenever the cards came to be all dealt out the Opposition pack must show the greater number. In the House of Commons, however, the matter was much more serious. On July 4, 1864, Mr. Disraeli himself moved the resolution condemning the conduct of the Government. The resolution invited the House to express its regret that "while the course pursued by her Majesty's Government has failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the integrity and independence of Denmark, it has lowered the just influence of this country in the capitals of Europe, and thereby diminished the securities for peace." Mr. Disraeli's speech was ingenious and telling. He had a case which even a far less capable rhetorician than he must have made impressive; but he contrived more than once by sheer dexterity to make it unexpectedly stronger against the Government. Thus, for example, he went on during part of his opening observations to compare the policy of England and of France. He proceeded to show that France was just as much bound by the Treaty of Vienna, by the London Convention, by all the agreements affecting the integrity of Denmark, as England herself. Some of the Ministry sitting just opposite the orator caught at this argument as if it were an admission telling against Mr. Disraeli's case. They met his words with loud and emphatic cheers. The cheers meant to say, "Just so; France was responsible for the in-

tegrity of Denmark as much as England; why, then, do you find fault with us?" This was precisely what Mr. Disraeli wanted. Perhaps he had deliberately led up to this very point. Perhaps he had purposely allured his opponents on into the belief that he was making an admission in order to draw from some of them some note of triumph. He seized his opportunity now and turned upon his antagonists at once. "Yes," he exclaimed, "France is equally responsible; and how comes it then that the position of France in relation to Denmark is so free from embarrassment and so dignified; that no word of blame is uttered anywhere in Europe against France for what she has done in regard to Denmark, while your position is one of infinite perplexity, while you are everywhere accused and unable to defend yourselves? How could this be but because of some fatal mistake, some terrible mismanagement?" In truth it was not difficult for Mr. Disraeli to show mistakes in abundance. No sophist could have undertaken to defend all that Ministers had done. Such a defence would involve sundry paradoxes; for they had in some instances done the very thing to-day which they had declared the day before it would be impossible for them to do.

The Government did not make any serious attempt to justify all they had done. They were glad to seize upon the opportunity offered by an amendment which Mr. Kinglake proposed, and which merely declared the satisfaction with which the House had learned "that at this conjuncture her Majesty had been advised to abstain from armed interference in the war now going on between Denmark and the German Powers." This amendment, it will be seen at once, did not meet the accusations raised by Mr. Disraeli. It did not say whether the Ministry had or had not failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the integrity and in-

dependence of Denmark; or whether their conduct had or had not lowered the just influence of England in the capitals of Europe, and thereby diminished the securities for peace. It gave the go-by to such inconvenient questions, and simply asserted that the House was, at all events, glad to hear there was to be no interference in the war. Many doubted at first whether the Government would condescend to adopt Mr. Kinglake's amendment, or whether they would venture upon a distinct justification of their conduct. Lord Palmerston, however, had an essentially practical way of looking at every question. He was of O'Connell's opinion that, after all, the verdict is the thing. He knew he could not get the verdict on the particular issues raised by Mr. Disraeli, but he was in good hope that he could get it on the policy of his administration generally. The Government therefore adopted Mr. Kinglake's amendment. Still the controversy was full of danger to Lord Palmerston. The advanced Liberals disliked him strongly for his lavish expenditure in fortification schemes, and for the manner in which he had thrown over the Reform Bill. They were not coerced, morally or otherwise, to support him merely because he had not gone into the war against Germany; for no responsible voice from the Opposition had said that the Conservatives, if in office, would have adopted a policy of intervention. On the contrary, it was from Lord Stanley that there came during the debate the most unwarlike sentiment uttered during the whole controversy. Lord Stanley bluntly declared that "to engage in a European war for the sake of these Duchies would be an act, not of impolicy, but of insanity." There were members of the Peace Society itself probably who would have hesitated before adopting this view of the duties of a nation. If war be permissible at all, they might have doubted whether the oppression of a small people is not as

fair a ground of warlike intervention as the grievance of a numerous population. When, however, such sentiments came from a leader of the party proposing the vote of censure, it is clear that the men who were for non-intervention as a principle were left free to vote on one side or the other as they pleased. Mr. Disraeli did not want to pledge them to warlike action any more than Lord Palmerston. Many of them would, perhaps, rather have voted with Mr. Disraeli than with Lord Palmerston if they could see their way fairly to such a course; and on the votes of even a few of them, the result of the debate depended. They held the fate of Lord Palmerston's Ministry in the hollow of their hand.

Lord Palmerston seems to have decided the question for them. His speech closing the debate was a masterpiece not of eloquence, not of political argument, but of practical Parliamentary tactics. He spoke, as was his fashion, without the aid of a single note. It was a wonderful spectacle that of the man of eighty, thus in the growing morning pouring out his unbroken stream of easy effective eloquence. He dropped the particular questions connected with the vote of censure almost immediately, and went into a long review of the whole policy of his administration. He spoke as if the resolution before the House were a proposal to impeach the Government for the entire course of their domestic policy. He passed in triumphant review all the splendid feats which Mr. Gladstone had accomplished in the reduction of taxation; he took credit for the commercial treaty with France, and for other achievements in which at the time of their accomplishment he had hardly even affected to feel any interest. He spoke directly at the economical Liberals; the men who were for sound finance and freedom of international commerce. The regular Op-

position, as he well knew, would vote against him; the regular supporters of the Ministry would vote for him. Nothing could alter the course to be taken by either of these parties. The advanced Liberals, the men whom possibly Palmerston in his heart rather despised as calculators and economists,—these might be affected one way or the other by the manner in which he addressed himself to the debate. To these and at these he spoke. He knew that Mr. Gladstone was the one leading man in the Ministry whom they regarded with full trust and admiration, and on Mr. Gladstone's exploits he virtually rested his case. His speech said in plain words: "If you vote for this resolution proposed by Mr. Disraeli you turn Mr. Gladstone out of office; you give the Tories who understand nothing about Free Trade and who opposed the French Commercial Treaty, an opportunity of marring all that he has made." Some of Lord Palmerston's audience were a little impatient now and then. "What has all this to do with the question before the House?" was murmured from more than one bench. It had everything to do with the question that was really before the House. That question was, "shall Palmerston remain in office, or shall he go out and the Tories come in?" The advanced Liberals had the decision put into their hands. As Lord Palmerston reviewed the financial and commercial history of his administration, they felt themselves morally coerced to support the Ministry which had done so much for the policy that was especially the offspring of their inspiration. When the division was taken it was found that there were 295 votes for Mr. Disraeli's resolution and 313 for the amendment. Lord Palmerston was saved by a majority of eighteen. It was not a very brilliant victory. There were not many votes to spare. But it was a victory. The Conservative miss by a foot was as good for Lord Palmerston as

a miss by a mile. It gave him a secure tenure of office for the rest of his life. Such as it was, the victory was won mainly by his own skill, energy, and astuteness, by the ready manner in which he evaded the question actually in debate, and rested his claim to acquittal on services which no one proposed to disparage. The conclusion was thoroughly illogical, thoroughly practical, thoroughly English. Lord Palmerston knew his time, his opportunity, and his men.

That was the last great speech made by Lord Palmerston. That was the last great occasion on which he was called upon to address the House of Commons. The effort was worthy of the emergency, and, at least in an artistic sense, deserved success. The speech exactly served its purpose. It had no brilliant passages. It had no hint of an elevated thought. It did not trouble itself with any profession of exalted purpose or principle. It did not contain a single sentence which anyone could care to remember after the emergency had passed away. But it did for Lord Palmerston what great eloquence might have failed to do; what a great orator by virtue of his very genius and oratorical instincts might only have marred. It took captive the wavering minds, and it carried the division.

CHAPTER XLVI

EBB AND FLOW.

ONE cannot study English politics, even in the most superficial way, without being struck by the singular regularity with which they are governed by the law of action and reaction. The succession of ebb and flow in the tides is not more regular and more certain. A season of political energy is sure to come after a season of political apathy. After the sleeping comes the waking; after the day of work, the night of repose. A liberal spirit is abroad and active; it carries all before it for a while; it pushes great reforms through; it projects others still greater. Suddenly a pause comes; and a whisper is heard that we have had too much of Reform; and the whisper grows into a loud remonstrance, and the remonstrance into what seems to be an almost universal declaration. Then sets in a period of reaction, during which Reform is denounced as if it were a treason, and shuddered at as though it were a pestilence. For a season people make themselves comfortable, and say to each other that England has attained political perfection; that only fools and traitors would ask her to venture on any further change, and that we are all going now to have a contented rest. Just as this condition of things seems to have become a settled habit and state of existence, the new reaction begins; and before men can well note the change, the country is in the fervour of a Reform fit again. It is so in our foreign policy. We seem to have settled down to a Washingtonian

principle of absolute isolation from the concerns and complications of foreign countries, until suddenly we become aware of a rising sea of reaction, and almost in a moment we are in the thick of a policy which involves itself in the affairs of every state from Finland to Sicily, and from Japan to the Caspian Sea. It is the same with our colonies. We are just on the eve of a blunt and cool dismissal of them from all dependence on us, when suddenly we find out that they are the strength of our limbs and the light of our eyes, and that to live without them would be only death in life; and for another season the patriotism of public men consists in professions of unalterable attachment to the Colonies. It is so with regard to warlike purpose and peaceful purpose; with regard to armaments, fortifications, law reform, everything. An ordinary observer ought to be able almost always to forecast the weather of the coming season in English politics. When action has run its course pretty nearly, reaction is sure; and it ought not to be very difficult to foresee when the one has had its season and the other is to succeed.

The explanation of this phenomenon is not to be found in the fact that the people of these countries are, as Mr. Carlyle says, "mostly fools." They do not all thus change their opinions in sudden mechanical springs of alternation. The explanation is not to be sought in any change of national opinion at all, but rather in a change in the ascendancy between two tolerably well-balanced parties in politics and thought. The people of these countries, or perhaps it should be said of England especially, are born into Liberalism and Conservatism. In Ireland and in Scotland the condition of things is modified by other facts, and the same general rule will hardly apply; but in England this is, roughly speaking, the law of life. Men as a rule remain

in the political condition—we can hardly speak of the political convictions—to which they were born. But the majority give themselves little trouble about the matter. If there is a great stir made by those just above them in politics, and to whom they look up, they will take some interest, and will exhibit it in any desirable way; but they do not move of themselves, and when their leaders appear to acquiesce in anything for a season they withdraw their attention altogether. Many a man is hardly conscious of whether he is Liberal or Conservative until he gets into a crowd somewhere, and hears his neighbours shouting. Then he shouts with those whom he knows to be of the opinions he is understood to hold, and he shouts himself into political conviction. This is the condition of the majority on both sides. It takes immense trouble on the part of the leaders to rouse the mass of their followers into a condition of genuine activity. The majority are like some of the heavy-winged insects who hardly ever use their wings, and who when for some reason they are anxious to hoist themselves into the air, may be seen of a summer twilight making their preparation so long and slowly that a passing observer would never suppose they meant any such unwonted movement as a flight. The political leaders, and the followers immediately within hearing of their voices, have for the most part the direction of affairs in their hands—these and the newspapers. The leaders, the House of Commons, and the active local men in cities and boroughs—these and the newspapers make up what we commonly understand to be public opinion. The change in public opinion, or what seems to be such, is when one set succeeds for a time in getting predominance over the other. The predominance is usually transferred when one set has done or said all it is quite prepared to do or say for the moment. Then the

other, having lost patience or gained courage, rushes in and gets his turn. It is like a contest in some burlesque eclogue, in which each singer has his chance only when the rival is out of breath, and he can strike in and keep singing until he too feels his lungs fail him and has to give way. The Liberals are in power, and they carry some measures by the strength of their parliamentary majority. The moment comes when they go further than the patience of their opponents will bear, or when they have nothing more to suggest at the moment. In either case the managers of the Opposition arouse themselves; and they say, "We cannot endure any more of this;" or they ask each other why they have endured so much. They stir up their whole party with all the energy they can muster, and at last, after tremendous effort, they get their shard-borne beetle hoisted for his drowsy flight. The others have sunk into comparative languor. They have done what they wanted to do; they have, according to the French phrase, exhausted their mandate; and there is nothing by which they can call the whole strength of their party into action. They do not any longer see their way as well as their opponents do. They are not so angry or so resolute. Perhaps they think they have gone a little too far. The Conservative newspapers are all astir and aflame. The Conservative passion is roused. The Conservative lungs are fresh and strong; their rivals are out of breath. In a word, the Conservatives get what American politicians call "the floor;" and this is Conservative reaction. All the time it is probable that not one man in every ten thousand of the population has really changed his opinion. The Conservatives hold their place for a certain time until their opponents have recovered their energies, and have lost their patience; until their passion to attack is more thorough and genuine than the power

of the men in possession to resist. Then the Liberal beetle is got upon his wings, and Liberalism has its time again.

During all these changes, however, the Liberal movement is necessarily gaining ground. Reaction in English politics never now goes the length of undoing what has been done. It only interposes a delay, and a warning against moving too far and too fast in the same direction. Therefore, after each flux and efflux it is a matter of practical necessity that the cause which means movement of some kind must be found to have gained upon the cause which would prefer to stand still. It is almost needless to say that the Liberal party have not always been the actual means of carrying a liberal movement. All great Conservative leaders have recognised in good time the necessity of accepting some principle of Reform. In a practical country like England, the Conservatives could not maintain a party of any kind if it were absolutely certain that their mission was to oppose every reform, and the mission of the Liberals to promote it. As a principle, the business of Liberalism is to cry "forwards;" that of Conservatism to cry "back." The action and reaction of which we speak is that of Liberalism and Conservatism; not of the leaders of Liberal and Tory Administrations.

The movement of reaction against Reform in domestic policy was in full force during the earlier years of Lord Palmerston's Government. In home politics, and where finance and commercial legislation were not concerned, Palmerston was a Conservative Minister. He was probably on the whole more highly esteemed among the rank and file of the Opposition in the House of Commons than by the rank and file on his own side. Not a few of the Conservative country gentlemen would in their hearts have been

glad if he could have remained Prime Minister for ever. His thoroughly English ways appealed directly to their sympathies. His instincts went with theirs. They liked his courage and his animal spirits. He was always ready to fling cheery defiance in the face of any foreign foe; just as they had been taught to believe that their grandfathers used to fling defiance in the face of Bonaparte and France. He was a faithful member of the Church of England, but his certainly was not an austere Protestantism, and he allowed religion to come no further into the affairs of ordinary life than suited a country gentleman's ideas of the fitness of things. There was among Tory country gentlemen also a certain doubt or dread as to the manner in which eccentric and exoteric genius might manage the affairs of England when the Conservatives came to have a government of their own, and when Lord Derby could no longer take command. These, therefore, all liked Palmerston, and helped by their favour to swell the sails of his popularity. Many of those who voted, with their characteristic fidelity to party, for Mr. Disraeli's resolution of censure, were glad in their hearts that Lord Palmerston came safely out of the difficulty.

But as the years went on there were manifest signs of the coming and inevitable reaction. One of the most striking of these indications was found in the position taken by Mr. Gladstone. For some time Mr. Gladstone had been more and more distinctly identifying himself with the opinions of the advanced Liberals. The advanced Liberals themselves were of two sections or fractions, working together almost always, but very distinct in complexion; and it was Mr. Gladstone's fortune to be drawn by his sympathies to both alike. He was of course drawn towards the Manchester School by his economic views; by his agree-

ment with them on all subjects relating to finance and to freedom of commerce. But the Manchester Liberals were for non-intervention in foreign politics; and they carried this into their sympathies as well as into their principles. They had never shown much interest in the struggles of other nations for political liberty. They did not seem to think it was the business of Englishmen to make demonstrations about Italians, or Poles, or French Republicans. The other section of the advanced Liberals were sometimes even flightily eager in their sympathies with the Liberal movements of the Continent. Mr. Gladstone was in communion with the movements of foreign Liberals, as he was with those of English Free-traders and economists. He was therefore qualified to stand between both sections of the advanced Liberals of England, and give one hand to each. During the debates on Italian questions of 1860 and 1861 he had identified himself with the cause of Italian unity and independence.

In the year 1864 Garibaldi came on a visit to England, and was received in London with an outburst of enthusiasm, the like whereof had not been seen since Kossuth first passed down Cheapside, and which perhaps was not seen even then. It was curious to notice how men of opposing parties were gradually swept or sucked into this whirlpool of enthusiasm, and how aristocracy and fashion, which had always held aloof from Kossuth, soon crowded round Garibaldi. At first the leading men of nearly all parties held aloof except Mr. Gladstone. He was among the very first and most cordial in his welcome to Garibaldi. Then the Liberal leaders in general thought they had better consult for their popularity by taking Garibaldi up. A lady of high rank and great political influence frankly expressed her opinion that Garibaldi was nothing more than a respect-

able brigand, but she joined in doing public honour to him nevertheless, acknowledging that it would be inconvenient for her husband to keep aloof and risk his popularity. Then the Conservative leaders too began to think it would never do for them to hold back when the prospect of a general election was so closely overshadowing them, and they plunged into the Garibaldi welcome. Men of the class of Lord Palmerston cared nothing for Garibaldi. Men like Lord Derby disliked and despised him; but the crowd ran after him, and the leaders on both sides, after having looked on for a moment with contempt, and another moment with amazement, fairly pulled off their hats and ran with the crowd, shouting and hallooing like the rest. The peerage then rushed at Garibaldi. He was beset by dukes, mobbed by countesses. He could not, by any possibility, have so divided his day as to find time for accepting half the invitations of the noble and new friends who fought and scrambled for him. It was a perpetual trouble to his secretaries and his private friends to decide between the rival claims of a prince of the blood and a prime minister, an archbishop and a duchess, the Lord Chancellor and the leader of the Opposition. The Tories positively outdid the Liberals in the competition. The crowd in the streets were perfectly sincere, some acclaiming Garibaldi because they had a vague knowledge that he had done brave deeds somewhere, and represented a cause; others, perhaps the majority, because they assumed that he was somehow opposed to the Pope. The leaders of society were for the most part not sincere. Three out of every four of them had always previously spoken of Garibaldi—when they spoke of him at all—as a mere buccaneer and filibuster. The whole thing ended in a quarrel between the aristocracy and the democracy; and Garibaldi was got back to his island some-

how. Had he ever returned to England he would probably have found himself unembarrassed by the attentions of the Windsor uniform and the Order of the Garter. The whole episode was not one to fill the soul of an unconcerned spectator with great respect for the manner in which crowds and leaders sometimes act in England. Mr. Gladstone was one of the few among the leaders who were undoubtedly sincere, and the course he took made him a great favourite with the advanced Radicals.

Mr. Gladstone had given other indications of a distinct tendency to pass over altogether from Conservatism, and even from Peelism, into the ranks of the Radical Reformers. On May 11, 1864, Mr. Baines brought on a motion in the House of Commons for the reduction of the borough franchise from 10*l.* rental to 6*l.* During the debate that followed Mr. Gladstone made a remarkable declaration. He contended that the burden of proof rested upon those "who would exclude forty-nine fiftieths of the working classes from the franchise;" "it is for them to show the unworthiness, the incapacity, and the misconduct of the working class." "I say," he repeated, "that every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or political danger, is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution." The bill was rejected, as everyone knew it would be. A franchise bill introduced by a private member on a Wednesday is not supposed to have much prospect of success. But the speech of Mr. Gladstone gave an importance to the debate and to the occasion which it would not be easy to overrate. The position taken up by all Conservative minds, no matter to which side of politics their owners belonged, had been that the claim must be made out for those seeking an extension of the suffrage in their favour; that they must show imperative

public need, immense and clear national and political advantage, to justify the concession; that the mere fact of their desire and fitness for the franchise ought not to count for anything in the consideration. Mr. Gladstone's way of looking at the question created enthusiasm on the one side —consternation and anger on the other. This was the principle of Rousseau's "Social Contract," many voices exclaimed; the principle of the rights of man; the red republic; the social and democratic revolution; anything, everything that is subversive and anarchical. Early in the following session there was a motion introduced by Mr. Dillwyn, a staunch and persevering Reformer, declaring that the position of the Irish State Church was unsatisfactory, and called for the early attention of her Majesty's Government. Mr. Gladstone spoke on the motion, and drew a contrast between the State Church of England and that of Ireland, pointing out that the Irish Church ministered only to the religious wants of one-eighth or one-ninth of the community amid which it was established. In reply to a letter of remonstrance Mr. Gladstone explained, not long after, that he had not recommended any particular action as a consequence of Mr. Dillwyn's resolution, regarding the question as yet "remote and apparently out of all bearing on the practical politics of the day." It was evident, however, that his mind would be found to be made up at any time when the question should become practical, and it was highly probable that his own speech had greatly hastened the coming of that time. The eyes of all Radical Reformers, therefore, turned to Mr. Gladstone as the future Minister of Reform in Church and State. He became from the same moment an object of distrust, and something approaching to detestation, in the eyes of all steady-going Conservatives.

Meanwhile there were many changes taking place in the social and political life of England. Many eminent men passed away during the years that Lord Palmerston held his almost absolute sway over the House of Commons. One man we may mention in the first instance, although he was no politician, and his death in no wise affected the prospects of parties. The attention of the English people was called from questions of foreign policy and of possible intervention in the Danish quarrel, by an event which happened on the Christmas eve of 1863. That day it became known throughout London that the author of "Vanity Fair" was dead. Mr. Thackeray died suddenly at the house in Kensington which he had lately had built for him in the fashion of that Queen Anne period which he loved and had illustrated so admirably. He was still in the very prime of life; no one had expected that his career was so soon to close. It had not been in any sense a long career. Success had come somewhat late to him, and he was left but a short time to enjoy it. We have already spoken of his works and his literary character. Since the publication of "The Newcomes," he had not added to his reputation; indeed it hardly needed any addition. He had established himself in the very foremost rank of English novelists; with Fielding and Goldsmith and Miss Austen and Dickens. He had been a literary man and hardly anything else; having had little to do with politics or political journalism. Once indeed he was seized with a sudden ambition to take a seat in the House of Commons, and at the general election of 1857 he offered himself as a candidate for the city of Oxford in opposition to Mr. Cardwell. He was not elected; and he seemed to accept failure cheerfully as a hint that he had better keep to literary work for the future. He would go back to his author's desk, he said good-humouredly; and he

kept his word. It is not likely that he would have been a parliamentary success. He had no gift of speech and had but little interest in the details of party politics. His political views were sentiments rather than opinions. Most of his admirers would probably have been sorry to see him involved in the partisan debates of the House of Commons, where any practised official trained to glibness or any overbearing declaimer would have been far more than a match for him, and where he had no special need or call to go. It is not true that success in Parliament is incompatible with literary distinction. Macaulay and Grote, and two of Thackeray's own craft, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Lytton, may be called as recent witnesses to disprove that common impression. But these were men who had a distinctly political object, or who loved political life, and were only following their star when they sought seats in the House of Commons. Thackeray had no such vocation and would have been as much out of place in Parliamentary debate as a painter or a musician. He had no need to covet Parliamentary reputation. As it was well said when the news of his defeat at Oxford reached London, the Houses of Lords and Commons together could not have produced "Barry Lyndon" and "Pendennis." His early death was a source not only of national but of world-wide regret. It eclipsed the Christmas gaiety of nations. Thackeray was as much admired and appreciated in America as in England. Mr. Russell, the correspondent of the *Times*, has given an amusing account of a Southern Confederate leader engaged in an attempt to run the Northern blockade, who kept talking all the time and even at the most exciting and perilous moments, about the various characters in Thackeray's novels. If Thackeray died too soon, it was only too soon for his family and his friends. His fame was secure. He could hardly

with any length of years have added a cubit to his literary stature.

A whole group of statesmen had passed prematurely away. Sir James Graham had died after several years of a quiet career; still a celebrity in the House of Commons, but not much in the memory of the public outside it. One of his latest speeches in Parliament was on the Chinese war of 1860. On the last day of the session of 1861 and when almost all the other members had left the House, he remained for a while talking with a friend and former colleague, and as they were separating, Sir James Graham expressed a cheery hope that they should meet on the first day of the next session in the same place. But Graham died in the following October. Sidney Herbert had died a few weeks before in the same year. Sidney Herbert had been raised to the peerage as Lord Herbert of Lea. He had entered the House of Lords because his breaking health rendered it impossible to stand the wear and tear of life in the Commons, and he loved politics and public affairs, and could not be induced to renounce them and live in quiet. He was a man of great gifts, and was looked upon as a prospective Prime Minister. He had a graceful and a gracious bearing; he was an able administrator, and a very skilful and persuasive debater. His style of speaking was what might be called, if it is lawful to coin an expression for the purpose, the "pointed-conversational." He never declaimed; never even tried to be what is commonly called eloquent; but his sentences came out with a singularly expressive combination of force and ease, every argument telling, every stroke having the lightness of an Eastern champion's swordplay. He had high social station, and was in every way fitted to stand at the head of English public affairs. He was but fifty-one years of age when he died.

The country for some time looked on Sir George Lewis as a man likely to lead an administration; but he too passed away before his natural time. He died two years after Sir James Graham and Sidney Herbert, and was only some fifty-seven years old at his death. Lord Elgin was dead and Lord Canning; and Lord Dalhousie had been some years dead. The Duke of Newcastle died in 1864. Mr. Gladstone, speaking at Glasgow, said of these, that "they had been swept away in the full maturity of their faculties and in the early stages of middle life—a body of men strong enough of themselves in all the gifts of wisdom and of knowledge, of experience and of eloquence, to have equipped a Cabinet for the service of the country." Nor must we omit to mention the death of Cardinal Wiseman on February 15, 1865. Cardinal Wiseman had outlived the popular clamour once raised against him in England. There was a time when his name would have set all the pulpit-drums of no-Popery rattling; he came at length to be respected and admired everywhere in England as a scholar and a man of ability. He was a devoted ecclesiastic, whose zeal for his church was his honour, and whose earnest labour in the work he was set to do had shortened his busy life.

During the time from the first outbreak of the Civil War in the United States to its close all these men were removed from the scene, and the Civil War was hardly over when Richard Cobden was quietly laid in an English country churchyard. Mr. Cobden paid a visit to his constituents of Rochdale in November 1864, to address them on public affairs. He was at the time struggling against a bronchial attack which made it imprudent for him to attend a public meeting—especially imprudent to try to speak in public. He had to travel a long way in bad weather. His friends endeavoured to dissuade him from going to Rochdale; but

he was convinced that the condition of political affairs was so full of seriousness that he could not consistently with his strong sense of duty put off addressing his constituents. He had had probably some presentiment of his death; for not long before he had passed, in company with his friend Mr. Bright, the place where his only son lay buried, and he told Mr. Bright that he should soon be laid beside him. He went to Rochdale and spoke to a great public meeting, and he did not appear to have lacked any of his usual ease and energy. This speech, the last he ever made, contained the famous passage so often quoted and criticized, which compared the undergraduate's knowledge of Chicago with his knowledge of the Ilyssus. "I will take any undergraduate," said Cobden, "now at Oxford or Cambridge, and I will ask this young gentleman to walk up to a map of the United States and put his finger upon the city of Chicago, and I will undertake to say that he will not go within a thousand miles of it. When I was at Athens I sallied forth one summer morning to see the far-famed river the Ilyssus, and after walking some hundred yards up what appeared to be the bed of a winter torrent, I came up to a number of Athenian laundresses, and I found that they had dammed up this far-famed classic river, and that they were using every drop of the water for their linen and such sanitary purposes. I say why should not the young gentlemen who are taught all about the geography of the Ilyssus know something about the geography of the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Missouri?" Mr. Cobden has always been charged on the faith of this contrast with a desire to throw contempt on the study of the classics, and with an intention to measure the comparative value of ancient and modern literature by the relative commercial importance of Chicago and the Ilyssus. He had no such purpose. He merely meant to

show that the men who dogmatized about modern countries and politics ought to know something of the subject before they spoke and wrote. He contended that it is ridiculous to call a modern political writer educated because he knows something about classic Greece and nothing about the United States. The humorous illustration about the Ilyssus Mr. Cobden had used in a former speech; and curiously enough something to much the same purpose had been said by Byron about the Ilyssus before, without anyone falling foul of the author of "Childe Harold," and accusing him of disparaging the culture of Greece. Byron wrote that "places without a name and rivers not laid down on maps may one day, when more known, be justly esteemed superior subjects for the pencil and the pen to the dry ditch of the Ilyssus and the bogs of Bœotia." Cobden had been a good deal provoked, as most sensible persons were, by the flood of writing poured out on the country during the American Civil War, in which citations from Thucydides were habitually introduced to settle questions of military and political controversy in the United States. That was the day for public instructors, of the inspired schoolboy type, who, sometimes to say the truth, knew little of the Greek literature from which they paraded their quotations, but who knew still less about the geography or the political conditions of America; who were under the impression that the Mississippi flowed east and west, and talked complacently of English war steamers getting into Lake Erie, apparently making no account of so considerable an obstacle as the Falls of Niagara.

This was Cobden's last speech. He did not come up to London until the March of 1865, and the day on which he travelled was so bitterly cold that the bronchial affection from which he was suffering became cruelly aggravated.

One of the last private letters he ever wrote enclosed to a friend an unsolicited contribution for the relief of a poor young Englishwoman, whose husband, an American seaman, had just died in London, leaving her with a newly-born infant. He sank rapidly, and on April 2 he died. The scene in the House of Commons next evening was very touching. Lord Palmerston and Mr. Disraeli both spoke of Cobden with genuine feeling and sympathy; but Mr. Bright's few and broken words were as noble an epitaph as friendship could wish for the grave of a great and a good man. Some critics found fault with Lord Palmerston for having spoken of Cobden's as "Demosthenic eloquence." That simple conversational style, it was asked—does Lord Palmerston call that Demosthenic? Did he not use the word as a piece of unmeaning praise, merely because it came first to his lips? On the contrary, it is probable that Palmerston thought the word expressed exactly what he wished to say. We are apt to think of the eloquence of Demosthenes as above all things energetic, commanding, overbearing by its strength and its action. But this is a superficial way of regarding the great orator. What is the essential characteristic of the oratory of Demosthenes, in which it differs from that of almost every other orator, ancient and modern? Surely its intensely practical nature; the fact that nothing is spoken without a present and determinate purpose; that no word is used which does not bear upon the argument the speaker would enforce. Cobden had not the power or the polish of Demosthenes, nor can his manner have been at all like that of the Athenian; but his eloquence was always moulded naturally and unconsciously in the true spirit of Demosthenes. It was the eloquence of one who claimed only to be heard for his cause, and for the arguments with which he should commend it to the intelligence of his

audience. Those who found fault with Lord Palmerston's epithet only failed to understand its application.

The Liberal party then found themselves approaching a general election, with their ranks thinned by many severe losses. The Government had lost one powerful member by an event other than death. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Westbury, had resigned his office in consequence of a vote of the House of Commons. Lord Westbury had made many enemies. He was a man of great capacity and energy, into whose nature the scorn of forms and of lesser intellects entered far too freely. His character was somewhat wanting in the dignity of moral elevation. He had a tongue of marvellous bitterness. His sarcastic power was probably unequalled in the House of Commons while he sat there; and when he came into the House of Lords he fairly took away the breath of stately and formal peers by the unsparing manner in which he employed his most dangerous gift. His style of cruel irony was made all the more effective by the peculiar suavity of the tone in which he gave out his sarcasms and his epithets. With a face that only suggested soft bland benevolence, with eyes half closed as those of a mediæval saint, and in accents of subdued mellifluous benignity, the Lord Chancellor was wont to pour out a stream of irony that corroded like some deadly acid. Such a man was sure to make enemies; and the time came when, in the Scriptural sense, they found him out. He had been lax in his manner of using his patronage. In one case he had allowed an official of the House of Lords to retire, and to receive a retiring pension, while a grave charge connected with his conduct in another public office was to Lord Westbury's knowledge impending over him; and Lord Westbury had appointed his own son to the place thus vacated. Thus at first sight it naturally appeared that Lord

Westbury had sanctioned the pensioning off of a public servant against whom a serious charge was still awaiting decision, in order that a place might be found for the Lord Chancellor's own son. In the other case, that of an appointment to the Leeds Bankruptcy Court, the authority of Lord Westbury had been made use of by a member of his family to sanction a very improper arrangement. In this case, however, it was shown that Lord Westbury knew nothing of the proposal, and had never had any idea of assisting any member of his family by his influence in the matter. No one believed that even in the former case he had been influenced by any corrupt motive. He had been led into error by a too easy good-nature towards certain members of his family, and by a carelessness which the engrossing character of his other duties might at least have excused, if it could not have justified. Still there could be no doubt that the manner in which he had exercised his patronage, or allowed it to be exercised, was deserving of reprehension.

The question was taken up by the House of Commons; and somewhat unfortunately taken up in the first instance by a strong political opponent of the Government. On July 3, 1865, Mr. Ward Hunt moved a distinct vote of censure on the Lord Chancellor. The House did not agree to the resolution, which would have branded the Lord Chancellor's conduct as "highly reprehensible, and calculated to throw discredit on the administration of the high offices of the State." It, however, accepted an amendment which, while acquitting Lord Westbury of any corrupt motive, declared that the granting of the pension showed a laxity of practice and a want of caution with regard to the public interests on the part of the Lord Chancellor. The Govern-

ment were not able to resist this resolution. Lord Palmerston made the best effort he could to save the Lord Chancellor; but the common feeling of the House held that the words of the resolution were not too strong; and the Government had to bow to it. The Lord Chancellor immediately resigned his office. No other course was fairly open to him. The Government lost a man of singular ability and energy. Lord Westbury's fall was not perhaps so much the result of the one or two transactions for which the censure was passed, as of the growing dislike which both Houses had come to feel for an intellect too keen to be scrupulous, and a nature which brought even to the uninspiring business of law reforms some of the fierce animosities to which the tongue of a Swift would hardly have given a more bitter expression. Many thought, when all was done, that he had been somewhat harshly used. He would, perhaps, have been greatly surprised himself to know how many kindly things were said of him.

The hour of political reaction was evidently near at hand. Five years had passed away since the withdrawal of Lord John Russell's Reform Bill; and five years may represent in ordinary calculation the ebb or flow of the political tide. The dissolution of Parliament was near. Lord Derby described the Speech from the Throne, at the opening of the session of 1865, as a sort of address very proper to be delivered by any aged minister to a moribund Parliament. The Parliament had run its course. It had accomplished the rare feat of living out its days, and having to die by simple efflux of time. On July 6, 1865, Parliament was dissolved. Mr. Disraeli's address to the electors of Buckinghamshire, sent out before the dissolution, distinctly declared that the issue which the country would have to decide con-

cerned the National Church and the franchise. "The maintenance of a National Church," he said, "involves the question whether the principle of religion shall be an element of our political constitution; whether the State shall be consecrated; or whether, dismissing the sanctions that appeal to the higher feelings of man, our scheme of government should degenerate into a mere system of police." "I see nothing," he proclaimed, "in such a result but the corruption of nations and the fall of empires." As regards the franchise he was vaguely grandiloquent; and both the vagueness and the grandiloquence were doubtless deliberate and to serve a purpose. "On the extension of the Electoral Franchise," he observed, "depends the distribution of power." He was of opinion that "the primary plan of our ancient constitution, so rich in various wisdom, indicates the course we ought to pursue." What that course was Mr. Disraeli took good care not to explain too clearly. The ancient constitution, he showed, had "secured our popular rights by entrusting power not to an indiscriminate multitude, but to the Estate or Order of the Commons; and a wise Government should be careful that the elements of that Estate should bear a due relation to the moral and material development of the country." Public opinion, he suggested, might not be yet ripe enough to legislate on the subject; but the country "might ponder over it with advantage, so that when the time comes for action we may legislate in the spirit of the English Constitution, which would absorb the best of every class, and not fall into a democracy, which is the tyranny of one class, and that one the least enlightened." Translated into plain English, these pompous generalities meant clearly enough, although perhaps men did not all see it just then, that Mr. Disraeli

would be prepared, if his turn should arrive, to bring in a Reform Bill, and that he still had hopes of being able to satisfy the country without going too far in the direction of popular suffrage. But it seems evident now that he had left it open to him to take even that course should it come in his way. No matter how wide the extension of the franchise which he found himself driven to make, he could always say that in his opinion it only absorbed the best of a class, and did not allow us to fall into a democracy.

"Which spills the foremost foeman's life, that party conquers in the strife." The first blow was struck in the city of London, and the Liberals carried all the seats. Four Liberals were elected. In Westminster the contest was somewhat remarkable. The constituency of Westminster always had the generous ambition to wish to be represented by at least one man of distinction. Westminster had been represented by Fox. It had more lately had Sir Francis Burdett for one of its representatives, and Cochrane for another. Byron's friend Hobhouse long represented Westminster. More lately still it had had Sir de Lacy Evans, not much of a politician to be sure, but a very gallant soldier, a man whose name was, at all events, to adopt the French phrase, "in the play bill." This time Mr. Mill was induced to come out of his calm retirement in Avignon and accept the candidature for Westminster. He issued an address embodying his well-known political opinions. He declined to look after local business, and on principle he objected to pay any part of the expenses of election. It was felt to be a somewhat bold experiment to put forward such a man as Mill among the candidates for the representation of a popular constituency. His opinions were extreme. He was

not known to belong to any church or religious denomination. He was a philosopher, and English political organisations do not love philosophers. He was almost absolutely unknown to his countrymen in general. Until he came forward as a leader of the agitation in favour of the Northern Cause during the Civil War, he had never, so far as we know, been seen on an English political platform. Even of the electors of Westminster very few had ever seen him before his candidature. Many were under the vague impression that he was a clever man who wrote wise books, and died long ago. He was not supposed to have any liking or capacity for Parliamentary life. More than ten years before it was known to a few that he had been invited to stand for an Irish county and had declined. That was at the time when his observations on the Irish land tenure system and the condition of Ireland generally had filled the hearts of many Irishmen with delight and wonder—delight and wonder to find that a cold English philosopher and economist should form such just and generous opinions about Irish questions, and should express them with such a noble courage. Since that time he had not been supposed to have any inclination for public life; nor we believe had any serious effort been made to tempt him out of his retirement. The idea now occurred to Mr. James Beal, a popular Westminster politician, and he pressed it so earnestly on Mill as a public duty that Mill did not feel at liberty to refuse. Mill was one of the few men who have only to be convinced that a thing was incumbent on them as a public duty to set about doing it forthwith, no matter how distasteful it might be to them personally, or what excellent excuses they might offer for leaving the duty to others. He had written things which might well make him doubtful about the prudence of court-

ing the suffrages of an English popular constituency. He was understood to be a rationalist; he was a supporter of many political opinions that seemed to ordinary persons much like "fads," or crotchets, or even crazes. He had once said in his writings, that the working-classes in England were given to lying. He had now to stand up on platforms before crowded and noisy assemblies where everything he had ever written or said could be made the subject of question and of accusation; and with enemies outside capable of torturing every explanation to his disadvantage. A man of independent opinions and who has not been ashamed to change his opinions when he thought them wrong, or afraid to put on record each opinion in the time when he held to it, is at much disadvantage on the hustings. He will find out there what it is to have written books and to have enemies. Mill triumphed over all the difficulties by downright courage and honesty. When asked at a public meeting chiefly composed of working men, whether he had ever said the working classes were given to lying, he answered straight out, "I did;" a bold blunt admission without any qualification. The boldness and frankness of the reply struck home to the manhood of the working men who listened to him. Here they saw a leader who would never shrink from telling them the truth. Mr. Mill has himself described what followed his answer. "Scarcely were these two words out of my mouth, when vehement applause resounded through the whole meeting. It was evident that the working people were so accustomed to expect equivocation and evasion from those who sought their suffrages, that when they found, instead of that, a direct avowal of what was likely to be disagreeable to them, instead of being affronted they concluded at once that this was a person they

could trust. . . . The first working man who spoke after the incident I have mentioned (it was Mr. Odger) said that the working classes had no desire not to be told of their faults; they wanted friends, not flatterers; and felt under obligation to anyone who told them anything in themselves which he sincerely believed to require amendment. And to this the meeting heartily responded." One is in doubt whether to admire more the frankness of the speaker or the manly good sense of those to whom he spoke. "As much to my surprise," says Mr. Mill, "as to that of anyone, I was returned to Parliament by a majority of some hundreds over my Conservative competitor."

In many other instances there was a marked indication that the political tide had turned in favour of Liberal opinions. Mr. Thomas Hughes, author of "Tom Brown's Schooldays," a Radical of the "muscular Christianity" order, as it was called, was returned for Lambeth. Mr. Duncan M'Laren, brother-in-law of Mr. Bright, and an advanced Radical, was elected for Edinburgh, unseating a mild Whig. Mr. G. O. Trevelyan, a brilliant young Radical, nephew of Macaulay, came into Parliament. In Ireland some men of strong opinions, of ability, and of high character found seats in the House of Commons for the first time. One of these was Mr. J. B. Dillon, a man who had been concerned in the Irish Rebellion of 1848. He had long opposed the idea of an armed rising, believing it inopportune and hopeless, but nevertheless when the movement was precipitated by events he went and took his place in the front of it with his leader. Mr. Dillon had lived for some years in the United States, and had lately returned to Ireland under an amnesty. He at once reassumed a leading part in Irish politics, and won a high reputation for his

capacity and his integrity. He promised to have an influential part in bringing together the Irish members and the English Liberals, but his untimely death cut short what would unquestionably have been a very useful career. Wherever there was a change in the character of the new Parliament it seemed to be in favour of advanced Reform. It was not merely that the Tories were left in a minority, but that so many mild Whigs had been removed to give place to genuine Liberals. There seemed to be little doubt that this new Parliament would do something to make its existence memorable. No one surely could have expected that it would vindicate its claim to celebrity in the peculiar manner that its short history illustrates. Mr. Disraeli himself expressed his opinion of the new Parliament after it had been but a short time sitting. He spoke of it as one which had distinctly increased the strength and the following of Mr. Bright. No one could fail to see, he pointed out, that Mr. Bright occupied a very different position now from that which he had held in the late Parliament. New men had come into the House of Commons, men of integrity and ability, who were above all things advanced Reformers. The position of Mr. Gladstone was markedly changed. He had been defeated at the University of Oxford by Mr. Gathorne Hardy, but was at once put in nomination for South Lancashire, which was still open, and he was elected there. His severance from the University was regarded by Liberals as his political emancipation. The Reformers then would have at their head the two great Parliamentary orators (one of them undoubtedly the future Prime Minister), and the greatest philosophical writer and thinker of the day. This Liberal triumvirate, as they were called, would have behind them many new and earnest men, to

whom their words would be a law. The alarmed Tories said to themselves that between England and the democratic flood there was left but one barrier, and that was in the person of the old statesman, now in his eighty-first year, of whom more and more doubtful rumours began to arrive in London every day.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE DEATH OF LORD PALMERSTON.

"UNARM, EROS; the long day's task is done, and we must sleep!" A long, very long, day's task was nearly done. A marvellous career was fast drawing to its close. Down in Hertfordshire Lord Palmerston was dying. As Mirabeau said of himself, so Palmerston might have said, he could already hear the preparations for the funeral of Achilles. He had enjoyed life to the last as fully as ever Churchill did, although in a different sense. Long as his life was, if counted by mere years, it seems much longer still when we consider what it had compassed, and how active it had been from the earliest to the very end. Many men were older than Lord Palmerston; he left more than one senior behind him. But they were for the most part men whose work had long been done; men who had been consigned to the arm-chair of complete inactivity. Palmerston was a hardworking statesman until within a very few days of his death. He had been a member of Parliament for nearly sixty years. He entered Parliament for the first time in the year when Byron, like himself a Harrow boy, published his first poems. He had been in the House of Commons for thirty years when the Queen came to the throne. He used to play chess with the unfortunate Caroline of Brunswick, wife of the Prince Regent, when she lived at Kensington as Princess of Wales. In 1808, being then one of the Lords of the Admiralty, he had defended the Copenhagen expedition of

the year before, and insisted that it was a stroke indispensable to the defeat of the designs of Napoleon. During all his political career he was only out of office for rare and brief seasons. To be a private member of Parliament was a short occasional episode in his successful life. In the words of Sadi, the Persian poet, he had obtained an ear of corn from every harvest.

It was only during the session of 1865 that Lord Palmerston began to give evidence that he was suffering severely at last from that affliction which has been called the most terrible of all diseases—old age. Up to the beginning of that year he had scarcely shown any signs of actual decay. He had, indeed, been for a long time a sufferer from occasional fits of gout, lately in hands as well as feet. During the winter of the *Trent* seizure he had been much disabled and tortured by a visitation of this kind, which almost entirely crippled him. But in this country the gout has long ceased to be an evidence of old age. It only too commonly accompanies middle life; and indeed, like black care in the poet's verse, seems able to cling on to any horseman. But during the session of 1865 Lord Palmerston began to show that he was receiving the warnings which Death, in Mrs. Thrale's pretty poem, is made to give of his coming. He suffered much for some of the later months. His eyesight had become very weak, and even with the help of strong glasses he found it difficult to read. He was getting feeble in every way. He ceased to have that joy of the strife which inspired him during Parliamentary debate even up to the attainment of his eightieth year. He had kept up his bodily vigour and the youthful elasticity of his spirits so long, that it must have come on him with the shock of a painful surprise when he first found that his frame and his nerves were beyond doubt giving way, and that he too must

succumb to the cruel influence of years. The collapse of his vigour came on almost at a stroke. On his eightieth birthday, in October, 1864, he started, Mr. Ashley tells us, "at half-past eight from Broadlands, taking his horses by train to Fareham, was met by engineer officers, and rode along the Portsdown and Hilsea lines of forts, getting off his horse and inspecting some of them, crossing over to Anglesey forts and Gosport, and not reaching home till six in the evening." Earlier in the same year he rode one day from his house in Piccadilly to Harrow, trotting the distance of nearly twelve miles within one hour. Such performances testify to an energy of what one would almost call youthful vitality, rare indeed even in the history of our long-living time. But in 1865 the change set in all at once. Lord Palmerston began to discontinue his attendances at the House; when he did attend, it was evident that he went through his Parliamentary duties with difficulty, and even with pain. The Tiverton election on the dissolution of Parliament was his last public appearance. He went from Tiverton to Brocket, in Hertfordshire, a place which Lady Palmerston had inherited from Lord Melbourne, her brother; and there he remained. The gout had become very serious now. It had flown to a dangerous place; and Lord Palmerston had made the danger greater by venturing with his too youthful energy to ride out before he had nearly recovered from one severe attack. On October 17 a bulletin was issued, announcing that Lord Palmerston had been seriously ill, in consequence of having taken cold, but that he had been steadily improving for three days, and was then much better. Somehow this announcement failed to reassure people in London. Many had only then for the first time heard that Palmerston was ill, and the bare mention of the fact fell ominously on the ear of the public. The

very next morning these suspicions were confirmed. It was announced that Lord Palmerston's condition had suddenly altered for the worse, and that he was gradually sinking. Then everyone knew that the end was near. There was no surprise when the news came next day that Palmerston was dead. He died on October 18. Had he lived only two days longer he would have completed his eighty-first year. He was buried in Westminster Abbey with public honours on October 27. No man since the death of the Duke of Wellington had filled so conspicuous a place in the public mind. No man had enjoyed anything like the same amount of popularity. He died at the moment when that popularity had reached its very zenith. It had become the fashion of the day to praise all he said and all he did. It was the settled canon of the ordinary Englishman's faith that what Palmerston said England must feel. To stand forward as the opponent, or even the critic, of anything done or favoured by him was to be unpopular and unpatriotic. Lord Palmerston had certainly lived long enough in years, in enjoyment, in fame. It seems idle to ask what might have happened if a man of more than eighty could have lived and held his place in active public life for a few years more. But if one were to indulge in such speculation, the assumption would be that in such an event there must have been some turn in the tide of that almost unparalleled popularity and success. Fortunate in everything during his later years, Lord Palmerston was withdrawn from chance and change just when his fortune had reached its flood.

It is hardly necessary to say that the regret for Palmerston was very general and very genuine. Privately, he can hardly have had any enemies. He had a kindly heart, which won on all people who came near him. He had no enduring enmities or capricious dislikes; and it was therefore very

hard for ill-feeling to live in his beaming, friendly presence. He never disliked men merely because he had often to encounter them in political war. He tried his best to give them as good as they brought, and he bore no malice. There were some men whom he disliked, as we have already mentioned in these volumes, but they were men who for one reason or another stood persistently in his way, and who he fancied he had reason to believe had acted treacherously towards him. He liked a man to be "English," and he liked him to be what he considered a gentleman; but he did not restrict his definition of the word "gentleman" to the mere qualifications of birth or social rank. His manners were frank and genial rather than polished; and his is one of the rare instances in which a man contrived always to keep up his personal dignity without any stateliness of bearing and tone. He was a model combatant; when the combat was over, he was ready to sit down by his antagonist's side and be his friend, and talk over their experiences and exploits. He was absolutely free from affectation. This very fact gave sometimes an air almost of roughness to his manners, he could be so plain-spoken and downright when suddenly called on to express his mind. He was not in the highest sense of the word a truthful man; that is to say, there were episodes of his carreer in which for purposes of statecraft he allowed the House of Commons and the country to become the dupes of an erroneous impression. Personally truthful and honourable of course it would be superfluous to pronounce him. A man of Palmerston's bringing up is as certain to be personally truthful as he is to be brave, and to be fond of open-air exercise and the cold bath. But Palmerston was too often willing to distinguish between the personal and the political integrity of a statesman. The distinction is common to the majority of states-

men; so much the worse for statesmanship. But the gravest errors of this kind which Palmerston had committed were committed for an earlier generation. The general public of 1865 took small account of them. Not many would have cared much then about the grim story of Sir Alexander Burnes's despatches, or the manner in which Palmerston had played with the hopes of foreign Liberalism, conducting it more than once rather to its grave than to its triumph. These things lived only in the minds of a few at the time when the news of his death came, and even of that few not many were anxious to dwell upon them. It was noticed at the time that the London newspaper which had persistently attacked his policy and himself since the hour when it came into existence, appeared in deep mourning the day after his death. Some thought this show of regret inconsistent; some declared it hypocritical. There is no reason to think it either the one or the other. Without retracting one word of condemnation uttered concerning Palmerston's policy, it was surely natural to feel sincere regret for the death of one who had filled so large a space in the public eye; a man of extraordinary powers, and whose love for his country had never been denied. "Dead! that quits all scores!" is the exclamation of the gipsy in "Guy Mannering"—only a simple untaught version of the "sunt lachrymæ rerum" of Virgil, which Fox quoted to explain his feelings when he grieved for the death of the rival whose public actions he could not even at such a moment pretend to approve.

Whether Lord Palmerston belonged to the first order of statesmen can be only matter of speculation and discussion. He was not afforded any opportunity of deciding the question. It was the happy fortune of his country during all his long career to have never been placed in any position of organic danger. Not for one moment was there any crisis

of the order which enables a man to prove that he is a statesman of the foremost class. It would be almost as profitable to ask ourselves whether the successful captain of one of the Cunard steamers might have been a Nelson or a Columbus, as to ask whether under the pressure of great emergency Palmerston might have been a really great statesman. If we were to test him by his judgment in matters of domestic policy, we should have to rate him somewhat low. The description which Grattan gave of Burke would have to be reversed in Lord Palmerston's case. Instead of saying that "he saw everything; he foresaw everything," we should have to say, he saw nothing; he foresaw nothing. He was hardly dead when the great changes which he had always scoffed at and declared impossible came to pass. Marshal MacMahon once said that in some given contingency the *chassepôts* of the French soldiers would go off of themselves. Such seemed to be the condition of the very reforms which Palmerston had persuaded himself to regard as un-English and impossible. They went off of themselves, one might say, the moment he was gone. Nor was it that his strength had withstood them. If he had been ten years younger they would probably have gone off in spite of him. They waited out of courtesy to him, to his age, and to the certainty that before very long he must be out of the way.

But of course Lord Palmerston is not to be judged by his domestic policy. We might as well judge of Frederick the Great by his poetry, or Richelieu by his play. Palmerston was himself only in the Foreign Office, and in the House of Commons. In both alike the recognition of his true capacity came very late. His Parliamentary training had been perfected before its success was acknowledged. He was therefore able to use his faculties at any given moment to their

fullest stretch. He could always count on them. They had been so well drilled by long practice that they would instantly come at call. He understood the moods of the House of Commons to perfection. He could play upon those moods as a performer does upon the keys of an instrument. The doctor in one of Dickens' stories contrives to seem a master of his business by simply observing what those around the patient have been doing and wish to do, and advising that just those things shall be done. Lord Palmerston often led the House of Commons after the same fashion. He saw what men were in the mood to do, and he did it; and they were clear that that must be a great leader who led them just whither they felt inclined to go. The description which Burke gave of Charles Townshend would very accurately describe what Lord Palmerston came to be in his later days. He became the spoilt child of the House of Commons. Only it has to be added, that as the spoilt child usually spoils the parent, so Palmerston did much to spoil the House that petted him. He would not allow it to remain long in the mood to tolerate high principles, or any talk about them. Much earnestness he knew bored the House, and he took care never to be much in earnest. He left it to others to be eloquent. It was remarked at the time that "the Prime Minister who is now, and has been for years, far more influential in England than ever Bolingbroke was, wielding a political power as great as any ever owned by Chatham or Pitt; as supreme in his own country as Cavour was in Sardinia; holding a position such as no French statesman has held for generations in France, has scarcely any pretension whatever to be considered an orator, and has not during the whole course of his long career affixed his name to any grand act of successful statesmanship." Lord Palmerston never cared to go deeper

in his speeches than the surface in everything. He had no splendid phraseology; and probably would not have cared to make any display of splendid phraseology even if he had the gift. No speech of his would be read except for the present interest of the subject. No passages from Lord Palmerston are quoted by anybody. He always selected, and doubtless by a kind of instinct, not the arguments which were most logically cogent, but those which were most likely to suit the character and the temper of the audience he happened to be addressing. He spoke for his hearers, not for himself; to affect the votes of those to whom he was appealing, not for the sake of expressing any deep irrepressible convictions of his own. He never talked over the heads of his audience, or compelled them to strain their intellects in order to keep pace with his flights. No other statesman of our time could interpose so dexterously just before the division to break the effect of some telling speech against him, and to bring the House into a frame of mind for regarding all that had been done by the Opposition as a mere piece of political ceremonial, gone through in deference to the traditions or the formal necessities of party, on which it would be a waste of time to bestow serious thought. A writer quoted by Mr. Ashley has remarked upon Lord Palmerston's habit "of interjecting occasionally a sort of guttural sound between his words, which must necessarily have been fatal to anything like true oratorical effect, but which somehow seemed to enhance the peculiar effectiveness of his unprepared, easy, colloquial style." The writer goes on to say that this occasional hesitation "often did much to increase the humour of some of the jocular hits in which Lord Palmerston so commonly delighted." "The joke seemed to be so entirely unpremeditated; the audience were kept for a

moment in such amusing suspense, while the speaker was apparently turning over the best way to give the hit, that when at last it came it was enjoyed with the keener relish."

Nothing is more rash than to attempt to convey in cold words an idea of the effect which a happy phrase from Lord Palmerston could sometimes produce upon a hesitating audience, and how it could throw ridicule upon a very serious case. Let ut, however, make one experiment. Mr. Disraeli had once made a long and heavy attack on the Ministry, opened quite a battery of argument and sarcasm against them for something they had done or had left undone. Towards the close of his speech he observed that it was no part of his duty to suggest to the Ministry the exact course they ought to pursue; he would abstain from endeavouring to influence the House by offering any opinion of his own on that subject. Lord Palmerston began his reply by seizing on this harmless bit of formality. "The right honourable gentleman," he said, "has declared that he abstained from endeavouring to influence the House by any advice of his own. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that is indeed patriotic." The manner in which Palmerston spoke the words; the peculiar pause before he found the exact epithet with which to commend Mr. Disraeli's conduct; the twinkle of the eye; the tone of the voice—all made this ironical commendation more effective than the finest piece of satire would have been just then. Lord Palmerston managed to put it as if Mr. Disraeli, conscious of the impossibility of his having any really sound advice to offer, had out of combined modesty and love of country deliberately abstained from offering an opinion that might perhaps have misled the ignorant. The effect of Mr. Disraeli's elaborate attack was completely spoilt. The House was no

longer in a mood to consider it seriously. This, it may be said, was almost in the nature of a practical joke. Not a few of Palmerston's clever instantaneous effects partook to a certain extent of the nature of a good-humoured practical joke; but Palmerston only had recourse to these oratorical artifices when he was sure that the temper of the House and the condition of the debate would make them serve his momentary purpose. It was hardly better than a mere joke when Palmerston, charged with having acted unfairly in China by first favouring the great rebellion, and then indirectly helping the Chinese Government to put it down, blandly asked what could be more impartial conduct than to help the rebels first and the Government after. It was a mere joke to declare that a member who had argued against Palmerston's scheme of fortifications, had himself admitted the necessity of such a plan by saying that he had taken care to "fortify himself" with facts in order to debate the question. These were not, however, the purely frivolous jests that when thus told they may seem to be. They had all of them the distinct purpose of convincing the House that Lord Palmerston thought nothing of the arguments urged against him; that they did not call for any serious consideration; that a careless jest was the only way in which it would be worth his while to answer them. It is certain that not only was the opponent, not only were other possible opponents, disconcerted by this way of dealing with the question, but that many listeners became convinced by it that there could be nothing in the case which Lord Palmerston treated with such easy levity. They had all, and more than all, the effect of Pitt's throwing down his pen and ceasing to take notes during Erskine's speech, or O'Connell's smile and amused shake of the head at the earnestness of an ambitious young speaker, who thought he was making

a damaging case against him, and compelling a formidable and elaborate reply. The jests of Lord Palmerston always had a purpose in them, and were better adapted to the occasion and the moment than the repartees of the best debater in the House. At one time, indeed, he flung his jests and personalities about in somewhat too reckless a fashion, and he made many enemies. But of late years, whether from growing discretion or kindly feeling, he seldom indulged in any pleasantries that could wound or offend. During his last Parliament he represented to the full the average head and heart of a House of Commons singularly devoid of high ambition or steady purpose; a House peculiarly intolerant of eccentricity, especially if it were that of genius; impatient of having its feelings long strained in any one direction, delighting only in ephemeral interests and excitements; hostile to anything which drew heavily on the energy or the intelligence. Such a House naturally acknowledged a heavy debt of gratitude to the statesman who never either puzzled or bored them. Men who distrusted Mr. Disraeli's antitheses, and were frightened by Mr. Gladstone's earnestness, found as much relief in the easy, pleasant, straightforward talk of Lord Palmerston, as a schoolboy finds in a game of marbles after a problem or a sermon.

We have not now to pronounce upon Lord Palmerston's long career. Much of this "History of our own Times" is necessarily the history of the life and administration of a statesman who entered Parliament shortly after Austerlitz. We have commented so far as comment seemed necessary on each passage of his policy as it came under our notice. His greatest praise with Englishmen must be that he loved England with a sincere love that never abated. He had no predilection, no prejudice, that did not give way where the

welfare of England was concerned. He ought to have gone one step higher in the path of public duty; he ought to have loved justice and right even more than he loved England. He ought to have felt more tranquilly convinced that the cause of justice and of right must be the best thing which an English minister could advance even for England's sake in the end. Lord Palmerston was not a statesman who took any lofty view of a minister's duties. His statesmanship never stood on any high moral elevation. He sometimes did things in the cause of England which we may well believe he would not have done for any consideration in any cause of his own. His policy was necessarily shifting, uncertain, and inconsistent; for he moulded it always on the supposed interests of England as they showed themselves to his eyes at the time. His sympathies with liberty were capricious guides. Sympathies with liberty must be so always where there is no clear principle defining objects and guiding conduct. Lord Palmerston was not prevented by his liberal sympathies from sustaining the policy of the *coup d'état;* nor did his hatred of slavery, one of his few strong and genuine emotions apart from English interests, inspire him with any repugnance to the cause of the Southern slaveholders. But it cannot be doubted that his very defects were a main cause of his popularity and his success. He was able always with a good conscience to assure the English people that they were the greatest and the best, the only good and great, people in the world, because he had long taught himself to believe this, and had come to believe it. He was always popular, because his speeches invariably conveyed this impression to the English crowd whom he addressed in or out of Parliament. Other public men spoke for the most part to tell English people of something they ought to do which they were not doing,

something which they had done and ought not to have done. It is not in the nature of things that such men should be as popular as those who told England that whatever she did must be right. Nor did Palmerston lay on his praise with coarse and palpable artifice. He had no artifice in the matter. He believed what he said, and his very sincerity made it the more captivating and the more dangerous. A phrase sprang up in Palmerston's days which was employed to stigmatise certain political conduct beyond all ordinary reproach. It was meant to stamp such conduct as outside the pale of reasonable argument or patriotic consideration. That was the word "un-English." It was enough with certain classes to say that anything was "un-English" in order to put it utterly out of court. No matter to what principles, higher, more universal, and more abiding than those that are merely English, it might happen to appeal, the one word of condemnation was held to be enough for it. Some of the noblest and the wisest men of our day were denounced as un-English. A stranger might have asked in wonder at one time whether it was un-English to be just, to be merciful, to have consideration for the claims and the rights of others, to admit that there was any higher object in a nation's life than a diplomatic success. All that would have made a man odious and insufferable in private life was apparently held up as belonging to the virtues of the English nation. Rude self-assertion, blunt disregard for the feelings and the claims of others, a self-sufficiency which would regard all earth's interests as made for England's special use alone—the yet more outrageous form of egotism which would fancy that the moral code as it applies to others does not apply to us—all this seemed to be considered the becoming national characteristic of the English people. It

would be almost superfluous to say that this did not show its worst in Lord Palmerston himself. As in art, so in politics, we never see how bad some peculiar defect is until we see it in the imitators of a great man's style. A school of Palmerstons, had it been powerful and lasting, would have made England a nuisance to other nations.

Certainly a statesman's first business is to take care of the interests of his own country. His duty is to prefer her interests to those of any other country. In our rough and ready human system he is often compelled to support her in a policy, the principle of which he did not cordially approve in the first instance. He must do his best to bring her with honour out of a war, even though he would not himself have made or sanctioned the war if the decision had been in his power. He cannot break sharply away from the traditions of his country. Mr. Disraeli often succeeded in throwing a certain amount of disrepute on some of his opponents by calling them the advocates of "cosmopolitanism." If the word had any meaning, it meant, we presume, that the advocates of "cosmopolitanism" were men who had no particular prejudices in favour of their country's interests, and were as ready to take an enemy's side of a question as that of their own people. If there were such politicians—and we have never heard of any such since the execution of Anacharsis Clootz—we could not wonder that their countrymen should dislike them, and draw back from putting any trust in them at a critical moment. They might be held to resemble some of the pragmatical sentimentalists who at one time used to argue that the ties of family are of no account to the truly wise and just, and that a good man should love all his neighbours as well as he loved his wife and children. Such people are hopeless in practical affairs.

Taking no account of the very springs of human motive, they are sure to go wrong in everything they try to do or to estimate. An English minister must be an English minister first of all; but he will never be a great minister if he does not in all his policy recognise the truth that there are considerations of higher account for him, and for England too, than England's immediate interests. If he deliberately or heedlessly allows England to do wrong, he will prove an evil counsellor for her; he will do her harm that may be estimated some day even by the most practical and arithmetical calculation. There is a great truth in the fine lines of the cavalier-poet, which remind his mistress that he could not love her so much, loved he not honour more. It is a truth that applies to the statesman as well as to the lover. No man can truly serve his country to the best of his power who has not in his mind all the time a service still higher than that of his country. In many instances Lord Palmerston allowed England to do things which, if a nation had an individual conscience, he and everyone else would say were wrong. It has to be remembered, too, that what is called England's interest comes to be defined according to the minister's personal interpretation of its meaning. The minister who sets the interest of his country above the moral law is necessarily obliged to decide according to his own judgment at the moment what the interests of his country are, and so it is not even the State which is above the moral law, but only the statesman. We have no hesitation in saying that Lord Palmerston's statesmanship on the whole lowered the moral tone of English politics for a time. This consideration alone, if there were nothing else, forbids us to regard him as a statesman whose deeds were equal to his opportunities and to his genius. To serve the

purpose of the hour was his policy. To succeed in serving it was his triumph. It is not thus that a great fame is built up, unless, indeed, where the genius of the man is like that of some Cæsar or Napoleon, which can convert its very ruins into monumental records. Lord Palmerston is hardly to be called a great man. Perhaps he may be called a great "man of the time."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

LORD RUSSELL was invited by the Queen to form a Government after the death of Lord Palmerston. For a few days a certain amount of doubt and speculation prevailed in London and the country generally. It was thought not impossible that, owing to his advanced years, Lord Russell might prove unwilling to take on him the burthen of such an office as that of Prime Minister. The name of Lord Clarendon was suggested by many as that of a probable head of the new administration. Some talked of Lord Granville. Others had a strong conviction that Mr. Gladstone would himself be invited to take that commanding position in name which he must have in fact. Even when it became certain that Lord Russell was to be the Prime Minister, speculation busied itself as to possible changes in the administration. Many persuaded themselves that the opportunity would be taken to make some bold and sweeping changes, and to admit the Radical element to an influence in the actual councils of the nation such as it had never enjoyed before, and such as its undoubted strength in Parliament and the country now entitled it to have. According to some rumours, Mr. Bright was to become Secretary for India in the new Cabinet; according to others, the great free trade orator was to hold the office of President of the Board of Trade, which had once been offered to his friend Mr. Cobden; and Mr. Mill was to be made Secretary

for India. It was soon found, however, that no such novelties were to be announced. The only changes in the Cabinet were that Lord Russell became Prime Minister, and that Lord Clarendon, who had been Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, succeeded him as Foreign Secretary. One or two new men were brought into offices which did not give a seat in the Cabinet. Among these were Mr. Forster, who became Under Secretary for the Colonies in the room of Mr. Chichester Fortescue, now Irish Secretary, and Mr. Goschen, who succeeded Mr. Hutt as Vice-President of the Board of Trade. Both Mr. Forster and Mr. Goschen soon afterwards came to hold high official position and to have seats in the Cabinet. In each instance the appointment was a concession to the growing Liberal feeling of the day; but the concession was slight and cautious. The country knew little about either Mr. Forster or Mr. Goschen at the time; and it will easily be imagined that those who thought a seat in the Cabinet for Mr. Bright was due to the people more even than to the man, and who had some hopes of seeing a similar place offered to Mr. Mill, were not satisfied by the arrangement which called two comparatively obscure men to unimportant office. The outer public did not quite appreciate the difficulties which a Liberal minister had to encounter in compromising between the Whigs and the Radicals. The Whigs included almost all the members of the party who were really influential by virtue of hereditary rank and noble station. It was impossible to overlook their claims. In a country like England one must pay attention to the wishes of "the Dukes." There is a superstition about it. The man who attempted to form a Liberal Cabinet without consulting the wishes of "the Dukes," would be as imprudent as the Greek commander who in the days of Xenophon would venture on a campaign without

consulting the auguries. But it was not only a superstition which required the Liberal Prime Minister to show deference to the claims of the titled and stately Whigs. The great Whig names were a portion of the traditions of the party. More than that, it was certain that whenever the Liberal party got into difficulties, it would look to the great Whig houses to help it out. Many Liberals began to speak with more or less contempt of the Whigs. They talked of these shadows of a mighty name as Thackeray's Barnes Newcome talks of the senior members of his family, his uncle more particularly. But when the Liberal party fell into disorganisation and difficulty some years after, the influence of the great Whig houses was sought for at once in order to bring about an improved condition of things. Liberalism often turns to the Whigs as a young scapegrace to his father or his guardian. The wild youth will have his own way when things are going smooth; when credit is still good, and family affection is not particularly necessary to his comfort. He is even ready enough to smile at old-fashioned ways and antiquated counsels; but when the hour of pressure comes, when obligations have to be met at last, and the gay bachelor lodgings with the fanciful furniture and the other expensive luxuries have to be given up, then he comes without hesitation to the elder, and assumes as a matter of course that his debts are to be paid and his affairs put in order.

Lord Russell had to pay some deference to the authority of the great Whig houses. Some of them probably looked with alarm enough at the one serious change brought about by the death of Lord Palmerston: the change which made Mr. Gladstone leader of the House of Commons. Meanwhile there were some changes in the actual condition of things which did not depend on the mere alteration of a Cabinet.

The political complexion of the day was likely to be affected in its colour by some of these changes. The House of Commons, elected just before Lord Palmerston's death, was in many respects a very different House from that which it had been his last ministerial act to dissolve. We have already mentioned some of the changes that death had made. Palmerston was gone, and Cobden, and Sir George Lewis, and Sidney Herbert, and Sir James Graham. There were changes, too; not brought about by death. The Lord John Russell of the Reform Bill had been made a Peer, and sat as Earl Russell in the House of Lords. Mr. Lowe, one of the ablest and keenest of political critics, who had for a while been shut down under the responsibilities of office, was a free lance once more. Mr. Lowe, who had before that held office two or three times, was Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education from the beginning of Lord Palmerston's administration until April, 1864. At that time a vote of censure was carried against his department, in other words against himself, on the motion of Lord Robert Cecil for alleged "mutilation" of the reports of the Inspectors of Schools, done, as it was urged, in order to bring the reports into seeming harmony with the educational views entertained by the Committee of Council. Lord Robert Cecil introduced the resolution in a speech singularly bitter and offensive. The motion was carried by a majority of 101 to 93. Mr. Lowe instantly resigned his office; but he did not allow the matter to rest there. He obtained the appointment of a committee to enquire into the whole subject; and the result of the enquiry was not only that Mr. Lowe was entirely exonerated from the charge made against him, but that the resolution of the House of Commons was actually rescinded. It is probable, however, that Mr. Lowe felt that the Government of which he was a member had

not given him all the support he might have expected. It is certain that if Lord Palmerston and his leading colleagues had thrown any great energy into their support of him the vote of censure never could have been carried, and would not have had to be rescinded. This fact was brought back to the memory of many not long after, when Mr. Lowe, still an outsider, became the very Coriolanus of a sudden movement against the Reform policy of a Liberal Government. The vigil of him who treasures up a wrong, if we suppose Mr. Lowe to have had any such feeling, had not to be very long or patient in this instance. On the other hand, Mr. Layard, once a daring and somewhat reckless opponent of Government and governments, a very Drawcansir of political debate, a swashbuckler and soldado of Parliamentary conflict, had been bound over to the peace, quietly enmeshed in the discipline of subordinate office. Not Michael Peres himself, the "Copper Captain" of Beaumont and Fletcher, underwent a more remarkable and sudden change when the strong-willed Estifania once had him fast in wedlock, than many a bold and dashing free lance submits to when he has consented to put himself into the comfortable bondmanship of subordinate office. Mr. Layard was therefore now to be regarded as one subdued in purpose. He seemed what Byron called an "extinct volcano:" a happy phrase more lately adopted by Lord Beaconsfield. Yet the volcanic fire was not wholly gone; it flamed up again on opportunity given. Perhaps Mr. Layard proved most formidable to his own colleagues, when he sometimes had to come into the ring to sustain their common cause. The old vigour of the professional gladiator occasionally drove him a little too heedlessly against the Opposition. So combative a temperament found it hard to submit itself

always to the prosaic rigour of mere fact, and the proprieties of official decorum.

The change in the leadership of the House of Commons was of course the most remarkable, and the most momentous, of the alterations that had taken place. From Lord Palmerston, admired almost to hero-worship by Whigs and Conservatives, the foremost position had suddenly passed to Mr. Gladstone, whose admirers were the most extreme of the Liberals, and who was distrusted and dreaded by all of Conservative instincts and sympathies, on the one side of the House as well as on the other. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli were now brought directly face to face. One led the House; the other led the Opposition. With so many points of difference, and even of contrast, there was one slight resemblance in the political situation of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli. Each was looked on with a certain doubt and dread by a considerable number of his own followers. It is evident that in such a state of things the strategical advantage lay with the leader of Opposition. He had not to take the initiative in anything, and the least loyal of his followers would cordially serve under him in any effort to thwart a movement made by the Ministry. The Conservatives naturally have always proved the more docile and easily disciplined party. Of late years their policy has necessarily been of a negative character: a policy of resistance or of delay. There is less opportunity for difference of opinion in a party acting with such a purpose than in one of which the principle is to keep pace with changing times and conditions. It came to be seen, however, before long that the Conservative leader was able to persuade his party to accept those very changes against which some of the followers of Mr. Gladstone were found ready to revolt. In order that

some of the events to follow may not appear very mysterious, it is well to bear in mind that the formation of the new ministry under Lord Russell had by no means given all the satisfaction to certain sections of the Liberal party which they believed themselves entitled to expect. Some were displeased because the new Government was not Radical enough. Some were alarmed because they fancied it was likely to go too far for the purpose of pleasing the Radicals. Some were vexed because men whom they looked up to as their natural leaders had not been invited to office. A few were annoyed because their own personal claims had been overlooked. One thing was certain: the Government must make a distinct move of some kind in the direction of Reform. So many new and energetic Liberals and Radicals had entered the House of Commons now that it would be impossible for any Liberal Government to hold office on the terms which had of late been conceded to Lord Palmerston. Mr. Gladstone had always been credited with a sensitive earnestness of temper which was commonly believed to have given trouble to his more worldly and easy-going colleagues in the Cabinet of Lord Palmerston. He had what Condorcet has happily called an impatient spirit. It was to many people a problem of deep interest to see whether the genius of Mr. Gladstone would prove equal to the trying task of leadership under circumstances of such peculiar difficulty. Tact, according to many, was the quality needed for the work—not genius.

Some new men were coming up on both sides of the political field. They were needed. Many conspicuous figures during former years of debate would be missed when the new Parliament came to meet. Among the new men we have already mentioned Mr. Forster, who had taken a conspicuous part in the debates on the American Civil War.

Mr. Forster was a man of considerable Parliamentary aptitude; a debater, who though not pretending to eloquence, was argumentative, vigorous, and persuasive. He had practical knowledge of English politics and social affairs, and was thoroughly representative of a very solid body of English public opinion. In the House of Lords the Duke of Argyll was beginning to take a prominent and even a leading place. The Duke of Argyll was still looked upon as a young man in politics. Nothing can be more curious than the manner in which the landmarks of youth and age have of late years been re-arranged in our political life. What would be regarded as approaching to middle-age in ordinary society is now held to be little better than unfledged youth in Parliamentary life. It is doubtful whether any advantages of family influence or personal capacity could in our day enable men to lead a House or a party at the age when Pitt and Fox were accepted political chiefs. Human life should indeed have stretched out almost to what are called patriarchal limits in order to give a political leader now an opportunity of enjoying a fairly proportionate tenure of leadership. The Duke of Argyll would have passed as a middle-aged man in ordinary life, but he was looked on by many as a sort of boy in politics. He had, indeed, begun life very soon. At this time he was some forty-three years of age, and he had been a prominent public man for more than twenty years. Lord Houghton, in proposing his health at a public dinner some years ago, said good-humouredly that "the Duke was only seventeen years old"—(he was in fact nineteen)—"when he wrote a pamphlet called 'Advice to the Peers,' and he has gone on advising us ever since." Pursuing the career of his friend, Lord Houghton went on to say that "soon after he got mixed up with ecclesiastical affairs, and was excommunicated." The ecclesiastical con-

troversy in which the Duke of Argyll engaged so early was the famous struggle concerning the freedom of the Church of Scotland, which resulted in the great secession headed by Dr. Chalmers, and the foundation of the Free Church. Into this controversy the Duke of Argyll, then Marquis of Lorne, rushed with all the energy of Scottish youth, but in it he maintained himself with a good deal of the proverbial Scottish caution. Dr. Chalmers welcomed the young controversialist as an able and important adherent. But the Marquis of Lorne was not prepared to follow the great divine and orator into actual secession. The heirs to dukedoms in Great Britain seldom go very far in the way of dissent. The Marquis declined to accept the doctrine of Chalmers, that lay patronage and the spiritual independence of the Church were "like oil and water, immiscible." The Free Church movement went on, and the young Marquis drew back. He subsequently vindicated his course, and reviewed the whole question in an essay on the ecclesiastical history of Scotland.

Meanwhile the young controversialist had become Duke of Argyll, on the death of his father in 1847. He did battle in the House of Lords as he had done out of it. He distinguished himself by plunging almost instantaneously into the thick of debate. He very much astonished the staid and formal peers, who had been accustomed to discussion conducted in measured tones, and with awful show of deference to age and political standing. The Duke of Argyll spoke upon any and every subject with astonishing fluency, and without the slightest reverence for years and authority. The general impression of the House of Lords for a long time was that youthful audacity, and nothing else, was the chief characteristic of the Duke of Argyll; and for a long time the Duke of Argyll did a good deal to support that

impression. He had the temerity before he had been very long in the House to make a sharp personal attack upon Lord Derby. The peers were as much astonished as the spectators round the tilt-yard in "Ivanhoe," when they saw the strange young knight strike with his lance's point the shield of the formidable Templar. Lord Derby himself was at first almost bewildered by the unexpected vehemence of his inexperienced opponent. But he soon made up his mind, and bore down upon the Duke of Argyll with all the force of scornful invective which he could summon to his aid. For the hour the Duke of Argyll was as completely overthrown as if he had got in the way of a charge of cavalry. He was in a metaphorical sense left dead on the field. Elderly peers smiled gravely, shook their heads, said they knew how it would be, and congratulated themselves that there was an end of the audacious young debater. But they were quite mistaken. The Duke of Argyll knew of course that he had been soundly beaten, but he did not care. He got up again, and went on just as if nothing had happened. His courage was not broken; his self-confidence moulted no feather. After a while he began to show that there was in him more than self-confidence. The House of Lords found that he really knew a great deal, and had a wonderfully clear head, and they learned to endure his dogmatic and professorial ways; but he never grew to be popular amongst them. His style was far too self-assured; his faith in his own superiority to everybody else was too evident to allow of his having many enthusiastic admirers. He soon, however, got into high office. With his rank, his talents, and his energy, such a thing was inevitable. He joined the Government of Lord Aberdeen in 1852 as Lord Privy Seal, holding an office of dignity, but no special duties, the occupant of which has only to give his assistance in council and general debate.

He was afterwards Postmaster-General for two or three years. Under Lord Palmerston, in 1859, he became Lord Privy Seal again, and he retained that office in the Cabinet of Lord Russell.

Mr. Stansfeld was believed to be one of the rising men of the day. He was an advanced Radical, especially known for his sympathies with the movements and the cause of the more energetic of the Italian leaders. He had made a speech during one of the Reform debates of 1860 which called forth a high compliment from Mr. Disraeli, who was always ready to welcome new ability and promise on whatever side it displayed itself. He had proposed a resolution in favour of reduction of expenditure, when Lord Palmerston was most active in swelling the war costs of the country. The resolution was well supported, and apparently had a fair chance of success, until Lord Palmerston contrived to alarm the House with the idea that if he did not get his way he would resign, and in the eyes of not a few members the resignation of Lord Palmerston appeared to be much the same thing as the coming again of chaos. Mr. Stansfeld, however, became a person of a certain political importance, and in 1863 Lord Palmerston invited him to take office as one of the Lords of the Admiralty. While he held that office an incident occurred which gave rise to a controversy of rather a curious nature. A plot was discovered in Paris for the assassination of the Emperor of the French. The French Government believed, or said they believed, that Mazzini was connected with the plot. Mazzini was a close friend of Mr. Stansfeld, and it appeared was in the habit of having his private letters sent for him under a feigned name to Mr. Stansfeld's house. At the trial of the accused men in Paris, it was stated by the Procureur-Impérial in his speech, that a paper had been found in the possession of

one of the prisoners authorising him to write, for money to "Mr. Flowers," at the address of Mr. Stansfeld, in London. Now it seemed that Mazzini's letters were sometimes addressed to him as Mr. "Fiori," or Flowers. After what we have already told in this history concerning the opening of Mazzini's letters in the Post Office here, it is not very surprising that Mazzini should prefer not to have his letters addressed to his own name. On these facts, however, some members of the House of Commons, Liberals as well as Tories, got up a sort of charge against Mr. Stansfeld. Not that any man in his senses seriously believed that Mr. Stansfeld had anything to do with an assassination plot; nor, indeed, that there was any evidence to show that Mazzini was acquainted with the peculiar designs of the accused persons in this case. Still it seemed a good chance for an attack on the Ministry, through Mr. Stansfeld; and no one could deny that there was a certain amount of indiscretion, not to say impropriety, in Mr. Stansfeld's good-natured arrangement with Mazzini. A man holding ministerial office, however subordinate, is not warranted in allowing his house to be the receptacle of secret letters for one engaged, like Mazzini, in revolutionary plots against established governments. Mr. Stansfeld felt himself called on to resign his office; and Lord Palmerston, though at first he politely pressed him to reconsider the resolve, consented after a while to accept the resignation. Mr. Stansfeld, however, was sure to be invited to take office again, and the whole episode would probably have been soon forgotten if it were not for one odd incident. During the discussions Mr. Disraeli strongly condemned Mr. Stansfeld for his avowed friendship with Mazzini, and reminded the House of a statement made by Mr. Gallenga, an Italian politician and journalist, to the effect that Mazzini once encouraged

him, then a young man of wild and extravagant notions, in a design to kill Charles Albert, King of Sardinia. Mr. Bright came to Mr. Stansfeld's defence in a very kindly and generous speech, made the more effective because of his well-known lack of sympathy with the schemes of revolutionists anywhere. He pointed out that the evidence of Mazzini's distinctly sanctioning regicide was by no means clear, and that Mr. Stansfeld might well be excused if he attached little importance to a story told of Mazzini at such a distant time. Mr. Bright went on good-humouredly to show that high-flown talk about tyrannicide was unfortunately almost a commonplace with a certain class of young rhapsodical political writers, and added that he believed there would be found in a poem called "A Revolutionary Epick," written by Mr. Disraeli himself some five-and-twenty or thirty years before, certain lines of eloquent apostrophe in praise of the slaying of tyrants. Mr. Disraeli rose at once, and with some warmth denied that any such sentiment, or any words suggesting it, could be found in the poem. Mr. Bright, of course, accepted the assurance. He explained that he had never seen the poem himself but had been positively informed that it contained such a passage, and he withdrew the statement with a handsome apology. Everyone supposed the matter would have dropped there. The "Revolutionary Epick" was a piece of metrical bombast, published by Mr. Disraeli a generation before, and forgotten by almost all the living. Mr. Disraeli, however, declared that he attached great importance to the charge made against him, and that he felt bound to refute it by more than a mere denial. He, therefore, published a new edition of the poem, which he dedicated to Lord Stanley, in order to settle the controversy. "I have, therefore, thought it," he explains, "the simplest course, and one which might save

me trouble hereafter, to publish the 'Revolutionary Epick.' It is printed from the only copy in my possession, and which, with slight exceptions, was corrected in 1837, when after three years' reflection I had resolved not only to correct, but to complete the work. The corrections are purely literary." The poem thus republished seemed more a literary curiosity than a work of art. It had a preface which was positively grotesque in its grandiloquence. "It was on the plains of Troy," the writer informed the world, "that I first conceived the idea of this work." On that interesting spot it seems to have occurred to him for the first time that "the most heroick incident of an heroick age produced in the Iliad an Heroick Epick; thus the consolidation of the most superb of empires produced in the Æneid a Political Epick; the revival of learning and the birth of vernacular genius presented us in the Divine Comedy with a National Epick; and the Reformation and its consequences called from the rapt lyre of Milton a Religious Epick." Then the author naturally was led to ask, should the spirit of his time "alone be uncelebrated?" As naturally came the answer, that the spirit of Mr. Disraeli's time ought to be celebrated; and that Mr. Disraeli was the man to celebrate it. "Standing upon Asia and gazing upon Europe," the inspiration descended on him. "For me," he exclaimed, "remains the Revolutionary Epick." There was so much of the youth, not to say of the schoolboy, in these bursts of extraordinary eloquence, that no one could have thought of making any serious accusation against Mr. Disraeli in his graver days, even if the pages of such a poem had been enlivened by some nonsense about tyrannicide. The work, as reprinted, certainly contained no passage to show that the young writer entertained any such opinions. Unfortunately, however, it was found that in the republication the questionable pas-

sages had somehow undergone a process of alteration. Very few copies of the original edition were in existence. But the British Museum treasured one, and from this it was found that the new version was not quite the same as the original. Thus in the new edition, published specially for the purpose of repelling the charge about tyrannicide, the lines about Brutus were very harmless:—

> Rome's strong career
> Was mine; the blow bold Brutus struck, her fate.

But in the original edition it ran thus to a much more audacious note:—

> The spirit of her strong career was mine:
> And the bold Brutus but propelled the blow
> Her own and nature's laws alike approved.

There were other slight modifications, too, into which it is not necessary to enter. Enough has been said to show that by what we must suppose to have been some unlucky accident, Mr. Disraeli came to publish as a final and complete refutation of the charge founded upon his "Revolutionary Epick," a version of that work which was altered from the original in several passages, and in the passage most important of all. We have spoken of a charge made against Mr. Disraeli; but that is giving by far too serious a name to the good-humoured statement made by Mr. Bright. Neither Mr. Bright, nor anyone else, supposed for a moment that Mr. Disraeli ever seriously approved of regicide. Neither Mr. Bright, nor anyone else, would have thought of holding Mr. Disraeli gravely responsible for some youthful rhodomontades published in a forgotten attempt at poetry. All that Mr. Bright apparently meant to say was: "Don't be too rigid in censuring the incautious utterances of men's

early and foolish years. Did not you yourself, in a poem published thirty years ago, talk some nonsense about nature's approval of tyrannicide?" The only seriousness given to the matter was when Mr. Disraeli published the new edition for the purpose of finally repudiating the charge, and the new edition was found to have the peculiar passages altered. That was unlucky. If Mr. Disraeli printed from the only copy in his possession, and which he had corrected after three years' reflection, it still was a pity he did not leave the disputed passages uncorrected, or restore them to their original shape. The question was not whether after three years' reflection Mr. Disraeli was entitled to alter in 1837 what he had published in 1834. The question was only as to what he had published in 1834. Nor is it easy to understand how, considering what the controversy was about, he could have regarded the corrections as purely literary. We are bound to say, however, that the incident did Mr. Disraeli no particular harm. The English public has always been curiously unwilling to take Mr. Disraeli seriously. The great majority laughed at the whole thing, and made no further account of it.

There were some rising men on the Tory side. Sir Hugh Cairns, afterwards Lord Chancellor and a peer, had fought his way by sheer talent and energy into the front rank of Opposition. A lawyer from Belfast, and the son of middle-class parents, he had risen into celebrity and influence while yet he was in the very prime of life. He was a lawyer whose knowledge of his own craft might fairly be called profound. He was one of the most effective debaters in Parliament. His resources of telling argument were almost inexhaustible, and his training at the bar gave him the faculty of making the best at the shortest notice of all the facts he was able to bring to bear on any question of controversy.

He showed more than once that he was capable of pouring out an animated and even a passionate invective. An orator in the highest sense he certainly was not. No gleam of imagination softened or brigthened his lithe and nervous logic. No deep feeling animated and inspired it. His speeches were arguments not eloquence; instruments not literature. But he was on the whole the greatest political lawyer since Lyndhurst; and he was probably a sounder lawyer than Lyndhurst. He had above all things skill and discretion. He could do much for the aboriginal Tories, if we may use such a word, which they could not do of or for themselves; and his appearance in the front rank of Conservatism made it much more formidable than it was before. Like Mr. Disraeli himself, however, Sir Hugh Cairns was an imported auxiliary of Toryism. The Conservative party had always to retain their foreign legion, as the French kings had their Scottish archers, their Swiss guard, or their Irish brigade. In the House of Commons there were very few genuine English Tories capable of sustaining with Mr. Disraeli the brunt of debate. The Conservative leader's most effective adjutants were men like Sir Hugh Cairns, an Irish lawyer; Mr. Whiteside, a voluble, eloquent, sometimes rather boisterous speaker, also an Irishman and lawyer; Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald, a clever Irishman, who had at least been called to the bar. Sir Stafford Northcote was a man of ability, who had had an excellent financial training under no less a teacher than Mr. Gladstone himself. But Sir Stafford Northcote, although a fluent speaker, was not a great debater, and, moreover, he had but little of the genuine Tory in him. He was a man of far too modern a spirit and training to be a genuine Tory. He was not one whit more Conservative than most of the Whigs. Mr. Gathorne Hardy, afterwards Lord Cranbrook, was a man of

ingrained Tory instincts rather than convictions. He was a powerful speaker of the rattling declamatory kind; fluent as the sand in an hourglass is fluent; stirring as the roll of a drum is stirring; sometimes dry as the sand and empty as the drum. A man of far higher ability and of really great promise was Lord Robert Cecil, afterwards Lord Cranborne, and now Marquis of Salisbury. Lord Robert Cecil was at this time the ablest scion of noble Toryism in the House of Commons. He was younger than Lord Stanley, and he had not Lord Stanley's solidity, caution, or political information. But he had more originality; he had brilliant ideas; he was ready in debate; and he had a positive genius for saying bitter things in the bitterest tone. The younger son of a great peer, he had at one time no apparent chance of succeeding to the title and the estates. He had accepted honourable poverty, and was glad to help out his means by the use of his very clever pen. He wrote in several publications, it was said; especially in the *Quarterly Review*, the time-honoured and somewhat time-worn organ of Toryism; and after a while certain political articles in the *Quarterly* came to be identified with his name. He was an ultra-Tory; a Tory on principle, who would hear of no compromise. One great object of his political writings appeared to be to denounce Mr. Disraeli, his titular leader, and to warn the party against him. For a long time he was disliked by most persons in the House of Commons. His gestures were ungainly; his voice was singularly unmusical and harsh; and the extraordinary and wanton bitterness of his tongue set the ordinary listeners against him. He seemed to take a positive delight in being gratuitously offensive. One night during the session of 1862 he attacked Mr. Gladstone's financial policy, and likened it to the practice of "a pettifogging attorney." This was felt to

be somewhat coarse, and there were many murmurs of disapprobation. Lord Robert Cecil cared as little for disapprobation or decorum as the son of Tisander in the story told by Herodotus, and he went on with his speech unheeding. Next night, when the debate was resumed, Lord Robert rose and said he feared he had on the previous evening uttered some words which might give offence, and which he felt that he could not justify. There were murmurs of encouraging applause; the House of Commons admires nothing more than an unsolicited and manly apology. He had, Lord Robert went on to say, compared the policy of Mr. Gladstone to the practice of a pettifogging attorney. That was language which on cooler consideration he felt that he ought not to have used, and therefore he begged leave to tender his sincere apology—to the attorneys. There was something so wanton, something so nearly approaching to mere buffoonery in conduct like this, that many men found themselves unable to recognise the really high intellectual qualities that were hidden behind that curious mask of offensive cynicism. Lord Robert Cecil, therefore, although a genuine Tory, or perhaps because he was a genuine Tory, could not as yet be looked upon as a man likely to render great service to his party. He was just as likely to turn against them at some moment of political importance. He would not fall in with the discipline of the party; he would not subject his opinions or his caprices to its supposed interests. He was not made to swear in the words of the leader who then guided the party in the House of Commons. Some men on his own side of the House disliked him. Many feared him; some few admired him; no one regarded him as a trustworthy party man. At this period of its career, as at almost all others, Toryism, as a Parliamentary party, lived and won its occasional successes

by the guidance and the services of brilliant outsiders. Had it been left to the leadership of genuine Tories it would probably have come to an end long before. At this particular time to which we have now conducted it, it lived and looked upon the earth, had hope of triumph and gains, had a present and a future, only because it allowed itself to be led by men whom it sometimes distrusted; whom, according to some of its own legitimate princelings, it ought to have always disavowed.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE TROUBLES IN JAMAICA.

DEMOSTHENES once compared the policy of the Athenians to the manner in which a barbarian boxes. When the barbarian receives a blow his attention is at once turned to the part which has got the stroke, and he hastens to defend it. When he receives another blow in another place his hand is there just too late to stop it. But he never seems to have any idea beforehand of what he is to expect or whither his attention ought to be directed. The immense variety of imperial, foreign, and colonial interests that England has got involved in compels a reader of English history, and indeed often compels an English statesman, to find himself in much the same condition as this barbarian boxer. It is impossible to know from moment to moment whither the attention will next have to be turned. Lord Russell's Government had hardly come into power before they found themselves compelled to illustrate this truth. They had scarcely been installed when it was found that some troublesome business awaited them, and that the trouble as usual had arisen in a wholly unthought-of quarter. For some weeks there was hardly anything talked of, we might almost say hardly anything thought of, in England, but the story of the rebellion that had taken place in the island of Jamaica, and the manner in which it had been suppressed and punished. The first story came from English officers and soldiers who had themselves helped to crush or

to punish the supposed rebellion. All that the public here could gather from the first narratives that found their way into print was, that a negro insurrection had broken out in Jamaica, and that it had been promptly crushed; but that its suppression seemed to have been accompanied by a very carnival of cruelty on the part of the soldiers and their volunteer auxiliaries. Some of the letters sent home reeked with blood. Every writer seemed anxious to accredit himself with the most monstrous deeds of cruelty. Accounts were given of *battues* of negroes as if they had been game. Englishmen told with exulting glee of the number of floggings they had ordered or inflicted; of the huts they had burnt down; of the men and women they had hanged. "I visited," wrote an English officer to his superior, "several estates and villages. I burnt seven houses in all, but did not even see a rebel. On returning to Golden Grove in the evening, sixty-seven prisoners had been sent in by the Maroons. I disposed of as many as possible, but was too tired to continue after dark. On the morning of the 24th, I started for Morant Bay, having first flogged four and hung six rebels. I beg to state that I did not meet a single man upon the road up to Keith Hall; there were a few prisoners here, all of whom I flogged, and then proceeded to Johnstown and Beckford. At the latter place I burned seven houses and one meeting-house; in the former four houses." Another officer writes: "We made a raid with thirty men; flogging nine men and burning their negro houses. We held a court-martial on the prisoners, who amounted to about fifty or sixty. Several were flogged without court-martial, from a simple examination." Then the writer quietly added: "This is a picture of martial law. The soldiers enjoy it; the inhabitants here dread it. If they run on their approach, they are shot for running away." It will

be seen that in these letters there is no question of contending with or suppressing an insurrection. The insurrection, such as it was, had been suppressed. The writers only give a description of a sort of hunting expedition among the negro inhabitants for the purpose of hanging and flogging. The soldiers are pictured as enjoying the work; the inhabitants, strange to say, are observed to dread it. Their dread would seem to have been unfortunate, although certainly not unnatural; for if they ran away at the approach of the soldiers, the soldiers shot them for their want of confidence. It also became known that a coloured member of the Jamaica House of Assembly, a man named George William Gordon, who was suspected of inciting the rebellion, and had surrendered himself at Kingston, was put on board an English war vessel there, taken to Morant Bay, where martial law had been proclaimed, tried by a sort of drumhead court-martial, and instantly hanged.

Such news naturally created a profound sensation in England. The Aborigines' Protection Society, the Anti-Slavery Society, and other philanthropic bodies, organised a deputation, immense in its numbers, and of great influence as regarded its composition, to wait on Mr. Cardwell, Secretary for the Colonies, at the Colonial Office, and urge on him the necessity of instituting a full enquiry and recalling Governor Eyre. The deputation was so numerous that it had to be received in a great public room, and indeed the whole scene was more like that presented by some large popular meeting than by a deputation to a minister. Mr. Cardwell was so fortunate as to discover a phrase exactly suitable to the occasion. In the course of his reply to the deputation, he laid it down that everyone must be careful not to "prejudge" the question. It was pointed out to him that it can hardly be called prejudging if you take men's

own formal and official statements of what they have done, and declare that on their own acknowledgments you are of opinion they have done wrong. The word "prejudge" carried thousands of uncertain minds along with it. All over the country there was one easy form of protest against the proceedings of the philanthropic societies. It was apparently enough to utter the oracular words "we must not prejudge." Mr. Cardwell, however, did so far prejudge the case himself as to suspend Mr. Eyre temporarily from his functions as Governor, and to send out a Commission of Enquiry to investigate the whole history of the rebellion and the repression, and to report to the Government. Sir Henry Storks, a man of great ability and high reputation, both as soldier and administrator, who had been Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, was summoned from Malta, where he was then Governor and Commander-in-Chief, to take the Governorship of Jamaica for the time, and to act as President of the Commission. He had associated with him Mr. Russell Gurney, Recorder of London, a lawyer of high standing and a distinguished member of Parliament; and Mr. J. B. Maule, Recorder of Leeds. The philanthropic associations which had taken up the question, sent out two barristers to act as counsel for the widowed Mrs. Gordon during the investigation: Mr. Gorrie, afterwards Chief Justice of the Fiji Islands, and Mr. J. Horne Payne. The Commission held a very long and careful enquiry. No one could question either the ability or the impartiality of the Commissioners. There was a general disposition to receive any report they might make as authoritative and decisive. Meanwhile, however, it need hardly be said that there was no disposition to wait for the story of all that had happened until the Commission should have got through its patient enquiries and presented its formal report. The English

public have long learned to look to the newspaper press as not only the quickest, but on the whole the most accurate, source of intelligence in all matters of public interest. In this case as in most others, the newspapers differed in their judgment as to the conduct of the principal actors in the drama; but, in this case, as in all others of late years, each newspaper endeavoured to give a correct representation of the facts. Many wild exaggerations had found their way into some newspapers. These came from private letters. It sometimes happened that men who had been engaged in putting down the insurrection, represented themselves as having done deeds of savage vengeance of which they were not really guilty. In some instances it actually turned out that Mr. Cardwell's appeal to the public not to prejudge, was warranted even where men deliberately affirmed themselves to have committed the acts which made people at home shudder and exclaim. Such seemed to have been the fervour of repression in Jamaica, that persons were found eager to claim an undue share of its honours by ascribing to themselves detestable excesses which in point of fact they had not committed. It is needless to say that there was exaggeration on the other side, and that affrighted coloured people in Jamaica sent forth wild rumours of wholesale massacre which would have been impossible, even in the high fever of repression. As the letters of the accredited correspondents of the newspapers began to arrive, the true state of affairs gradually disclosed itself. There was no substantial discrepancy as to the facts; and the report of the Commissioners themselves, when it was received, did not add much to the materials for forming a judgment which the public already possessed, nor probably did it alter many opinions of many men. The history of the events in Jamaica, told in whatever way, must form a sad and shocking nar-

rative. The history of this generation has no such tale to tell where any race of civilised and Christian men was concerned. Had the repression been justifiable in all its details; had the fearful vengeance taken on the wretched island been absolutely necessary to its future tranquillity, it still would have been a chapter of history to read with a shudder. It will be seen, however, that excesses were committed which could not possibly plead the excuse of necessity; that some deeds were done which most moralists would say no human authority could warrant, or human peril justify.

Jamaica had long been in a more or less disturbed condition; at least it had long been liable to periodical fits of disturbance. We have already described in this history some of the difficulties occasioned by the condition of things existing in the island. When giving an account of the Jamaica Bill during the Melbourne administration, it was mentioned that the troubles then existing were in fact a survival of the slave system. So were the troubles of 1865. "I suppose there is no island or place in the world," said Chief Justice Cockburn in his celebrated charge to the Grand Jury at the Central Criminal Court, in 1867, "in which there has been so much of insurrection and disorder as the island of Jamaica. There is no place in which the curse which attaches to slavery, both as regards the master and the slave, has been more strikingly illustrated." What we may call the planter class still continued to look on the negroes as an inferior race hardly entitled to any legal rights. The negroes were naturally only too ready to listen to any denunciations of the planter class, and to put faith in any agitation which promised to secure them some property in the land. The negroes had undoubtedly some serious grievances. It may be that some of the wrongs they com-

plained of were imaginary or were exaggerated. But it is a very safe rule in politics to assume that no population is ever disturbed by wholly imaginary grievances. In such cases, unquestionably, where there is smoke there is fire. Man is by far too lazy an animal to trouble himself much with agitation about purely unreal and non-existing wrongs. The negroes of Jamaica had some very substantial wrongs. They constantly complained that they could not get justice administered to them when any dispute arose between white and black. The Government had found that there was some ground for complaints of this kind at the time when it was proposed by the Jamaica Bill to suspend the constitution of the island. Perhaps if the Melbourne Ministry had been stronger and inspired by greater earnestness of purpose at that time, the calamities and shames of 1865 might have been avoided. In 1865, however, the common causes of dissatisfaction were freshly and further complicated by a dispute about what were called the "back lands." This was a question which might under certain circumstances have arisen in Ireland; at least it will be easily understood by those who are acquainted with the condition of Ireland. Lands belonging to some of the great estates in Jamaica had been allowed to run out of cultivation. They were so neglected by their owners that they were turning into mere bush. The quit-rents due on them to the Crown had not been paid for seven years. The negroes were told that if they paid the arrears of quit-rent they might cultivate these lands and enjoy them free of rent. It may be remarked that the tendency in Jamaica had almost always hitherto been for the Crown officials to take the part of the negroes, and for the Jamaica authorities to side with the local magnates. Trusting to the assurance given, some of the negroes paid the arrears of quit-rent, and brought the land into cultiva-

tion. The agent of one of the estates, however, reasserted the right of his principal, who had not been a consenting party to the arrangement, and he endeavoured to evict the negro occupiers of the land. The negroes resisted, and legal proceedings were instituted to turn them out. The legal proceedings were still pending when the events took place which gave occasion to so much controversy. Jamaica was in an unquiet state. "Within the land," as in the territory of the chiefs round Lara's castle, "was many a malcontent, who cursed the tyranny to which he bent." There, too, "Frequent broil within had made a path for blood and giant sin, that waited but a signal to begin new havoc such as civil discord blends." On October 7, 1865, some disturbances took place on the occasion of a magisterial meeting at Morant Bay, a small town on the south-east corner of the island. The negroes appeared to be in an excited state, and many persons believed that an outbreak was at hand. An application was made to the Governor for military assistance. The Governor of Jamaica was Mr. Edward John Eyre, who had been a successful explorer in Central, West, and Southern Australia, had acted as resident magistrate and protector of aborigines in the region of the Lower Murray in Australia, and had afterwards been Lieutenant-Governor of New Zealand, of the Leeward Islands, and of other places. All Mr. Eyre's dealings with native races up to this time would seem to have earned for him the reputation of a just and humane man. The Governor despatched a small military force by sea to the scene of the expected disturbances. Warrants had been issued meanwhile by the Custos or chief magistrate of the parish in which Morant Bay is situated, for the arrest of some of the persons who had taken part in the previous disturbances—which it may be stated had for their object the rescue of a man on trial for a trifling offence. When the

warrants were about to be put into execution, resistance by force was offered. In particular, the attempt to arrest a leading negro agitator, named Paul Bogle, was strenuously and successfully opposed. The police were overpowered, and some were beaten, and others compelled to swear that they would not interfere with the negroes. On the 11th the negroes, armed with sticks, and the "cutlasses" used in the work of the sugar-cane fields, assembled in considerable numbers in the square of the Court House in Morant Bay. The magistrates were holding a meeting there. The mob made for the Court House; the local volunteer force came to the help of the magistrates. The Riot Act was being read when some stones were thrown. The volunteers fired, and some negroes were seen to fall. Then the rioters attacked the Court House. The volunteers were few in number, and were easily overpowered; the Court House was set on fire; eighteen persons, the Custos among them, were killed, and about thirty were wounded; and a sort of incoherent insurrection suddenly spread itself over the neighbourhood. The moment, however, that the soldiers sent by the Governor, at first only one hundred in number, arrived upon the scene of disturbance, the insurrection collapsed and vanished. There never was the slightest attempt made by the rioters to keep the field against the troops. The soldiers had not in a single instance to do any fighting. The only business left for them was to hunt out supposed rebels, and bring them before the military tribunals. So evanescent was the whole movement that it is to this day a matter of dispute whether there was any rebellion at all, properly so called; whether there was any organised attempt at insurrection; or whether the disturbances were not the extemporaneous work of a discontented and turbulent mob, whose rush to rescue some of their friends expanded suddenly into an effort

to wreak old grievances on the nearest representatives of authority.

On October 13, the Governor proclaimed the whole of the county of Surrey, with the exception of the city of Kingston, under martial law. Jamaica is divided into three counties; Surrey covering the eastern and southern portion, including the region of the Blue Mountains, the towns of Port Antonio and Morant Bay, and the considerable city of Kingston, with its population of some thirty thousand. Middlesex comprehends the central part of the island, and contains Spanish Town, then the seat of Government. The western part of the island is the county of Cornwall. At this time Jamaica was ruled by the Governor and Council, and the House of Assembly. The Council was composed of twelve persons, nominated, like the Governor, by the Crown; and the House of Assembly consisted of forty-five members elected by the freeholders of each parish. The Council had the place of an Upper House; the Assembly was the Representative Chamber. Among the members of the Assembly was a coloured man of some education and property, George William Gordon. Gordon was a Baptist by religion, and had in him a good deal of the fanatical earnestness of the field-preacher. He was a vehement agitator and a devoted advocate of what he considered to be the rights of the negroes. He appears to have had a certain amount of eloquence, partly of the conventicle and partly of the stump. He was just the sort of man to make himself a nuisance to white colonists and officials who wanted to have everything their own way. Indeed, he belonged to that order of men who are almost sure to be always found in opposition to officialism of any kind. Such a man may do mischief sometimes, but it is certain that out of his very restlessness and troublesomeness he often does

good. No really sensible politician would like to see a Legislative Assembly of any kind without some men of the type of Gordon representing the check of perpetual opposition. On the other hand, Gordon was exactly the sort of person in the treatment of whom a wise authority would be particularly cautious, in order not to allow its own prejudices to operate to his injury and the injury of political justice together. Gordon was in constant disputes with the authorities, and with Governor Eyre himself. He had been a magistrate, but was dismissed from the magistracy in consequence of the alleged violence of his language in making accusations against another justice. He had taken some part in getting up meetings of the coloured population; he had made many appeals to the Colonial Office in London against this or that act on the part of the Governor or the Council, or both. He had been appointed churchwarden, but was declared disqualified for the office in consequence of his having become a "Native Baptist;" and he had brought an action to recover what he held to be his rights. He had come to hold the position of champion of the rights and claims of the black man against the white. He was a sort of constitutional Opposition in himself. The Governor seems to have at once adopted the conclusion urged on him by others, that Gordon was at the bottom of the insurrectionary movement. In the historical sense he may no doubt be regarded as in some measure the cause of the disturbance, whether insurrectionary or not, which broke out. A man who tells people they are wronged is to that extent the cause of any disturbance which may come of an attempt to get their wrongs righted. A great many persons declared that Fox was the author of the Irish rebellion of 1798, because he had helped to show that the Irish people had wrongs. In this sense every man who agitates for

reform anywhere is responsible should any rebellious movement take place; and the only good citizen is he who approves of all that is done by authority, and never uplifts the voice of opposition to anything. Gordon was a very energetic agitator, and he probably had some sense of self-importance in his agitation; but we entirely agree with Chief-Justice Cockburn in believing that "so far from there being any evidence to prove that Mr. Gordon intended this insurrection and rebellion, the evidence, as well as the probability of the case, appears to be exactly the other way." There does not seem to have been one particle of evidence to connect Gordon with a rebellious movement more than there would have been to condemn Mr. Bright as a promoter of rebellion, if the working men of the Reform period, soon to be mentioned in this history, had been drawn into some fatal conflict with the police. In each case it might have been said that only for the agitator who denounced the supposed grievance all would have been quiet; and in neither case was there anything more to be said which could connect the agitator with the disturbance. Mr. Eyre and his advisers, however, had made up their minds that Gordon was the leader of a rebellious conspiracy. They took a course with regard to him which could hardly be excused if he were the self-confessed leader of as formidable a conspiracy as ever endangered the safety of a State.

We have mentioned the fact, that in proclaiming the county of Surrey under martial law, Mr. Eyre had specially excepted the city of Kingston. Mr. Gordon lived near Kingston, and had a place of business in the city; and he seems to have been there attending to his business, as usual, during the days while the disturbances were going on. The Governor ordered a warrant to be issued

for Gordon's arrest. When this fact became known to Gordon, he went to the house of the General in command of the Forces at Kingston and gave himself up. The Governor had him put at once on board a war steamer, and conveyed to Morant Bay. Having given himself up in a place where martial law did not exist, where the ordinary courts were open, and where, therefore, he would have been tried with all the forms and safeguards of the civil law, he was purposely carried away to a place which had been put under martial law. Here an extraordinary sort of court-martial was sitting. It was composed of two young navy lieutenants and an ensign in one of her Majesty's West India regiments. Gordon was hurried before this grotesque tribunal, charged with high treason, found guilty, and sentenced to death. The sentence was approved by the officer in command of the troops sent to Morant Bay. It was then submitted to the Governor, and approved by him also. It was carried into effect without much delay. The day following Gordon's conviction was Sunday, and it was not thought seemly to hang a man on the Sabbath. He was allowed, therefore, to live over that day. On the morning of Monday, October 23, Gordon was hanged. He bore his fate with great heroism, and wrote just before his death a letter to his wife, which is full of pathos in its simple and dignified manliness. He died protesting his innocence of any share in disloyal conspiracy or insurrectionary purpose.

The whole of the proceedings connected with the trial of Gordon were absolutely illegal: they were illegal from first to last. It is almost impossible to conceive of any transaction more entirely unlawful. Every step in it was a separate outrage on law. But for its tragic end the whole affair would seem to belong to the domain of burlesque rather than to that of sober history. The act which conveyed

Mr. Gordon from the protection of civil law to the authority of a drumhead court-martial was grossly illegal. The tribunal was constituted in curious defiance of law and precedent. It is contrary to all authority to form a court-martial by mixing together the officers of the two different services. It was an unauthorised tribunal, however, even if considered as only a military court-martial, or only a naval court-martial. Whatever way we take it, it was irregular and illegal. It would have been so had all its members been soldiers, or had all been sailors. Care seemed to have been taken so to constitute it that it must in any case be illegal. The prisoner thus brought by unlawful means before an illegal tribunal was tried upon testimony taken in ludicrous opposition to all the rules of evidence. Chief Justice Cockburn says: "After the most careful perusal of the evidence which was adduced against him, I come irresistibly to the conclusion that if the man had been tried upon that evidence"—and here the Chief Justice checked himself and said: "I must correct myself. He could not have been tried upon that evidence; I was going too far, a great deal too far, in assuming that he could. He could not have been tried upon that evidence. No competent judge acquainted with the duties of his office could have received that evidence. Three-fourths, I had almost said nine-tenths, of the evidence upon which that man was convicted and sentenced to death, was evidence which, according to no known rules—not only of ordinary law, but of military law—according to no rules of right or justice could possibly have been admitted; and it never would have been admitted if a competent judge had presided, or if there had been the advantage of a military officer of any experience in the practice of courts-martial." Such as the evidence was, however, compounded of scraps of the paltriest hearsay, and of

things said when the prisoner was not present; of depositions made apparently to supplement evidence given before, and not thought strong enough; strengthened probably in the hope of thus purchasing the safety of the witnesses, and on which the witnesses were never cross-examined—such as the evidence was, supposing it admissible, supposing it trustworthy, supposing it true beyond all possibility of question, yet the Chief Justice was convinced that it testified rather to the innocence than to the guilt of the prisoner. By such a court, on such evidence, Gordon was put to death.

Meanwhile the carnival of repression was going on. The insurrection, or whatever the movement was which broke out on October 11, was over long before. It never offered the slightest resistance to the soldiers. It never showed itself to them. An armed insurgent was never seen by them. Nevertheless, for weeks after, the hangings, the floggings, the burnings of houses, were kept up. Men were hanged, women were flogged merely "suspect of being suspect." Many were flogged or hanged for no particular reason but that they happened to come in the way of men who were in a humour for flogging and hanging. Women—to be sure they were only coloured women—were stripped and scourged by the saviours of society with all the delight which a savage village population of the Middle Ages might have felt in torturing witches. The report of the Royal Commissioners stated that 439 persons were put to death, and that over six hundred, including many women, were flogged, some under circumstances of revolting cruelty. Cats made of piano-wire were in some instances used for the better effect of flagellation. Some of the scourges were shown to the Commissioners, who observe that it is "painful to think that any man should have used such an instrument for the torturing

of his fellow-creatures." The Commissioners summed up their Report by declaring that the punishments inflicted were excessive; that the punishment of death was unnecessarily frequent; that the floggings were reckless, and in some cases positively barbarous; that the burning of one thousand houses was wanton and cruel." The fury at last spent itself. *Lassata necdum satiata.*

When the story reached England in clear and trustworthy form, two antagonistic parties were instantly formed. The extreme on the one side glorified Governor Eyre, and held that by his prompt action he had saved the white population of Jamaica from all the horrors of triumphant negro insurrection. The extreme on the other side denounced him as a mere fiend. The majority on both sides were more reasonable; but the difference between them was only less wide. An association called the Jamaica Committee was formed for the avowed purpose of seeing that justice was done. It comprised some of the most illustrious Englishmen. Men became members of that committee who had never taken part in public agitation of any kind before. Another association was founded, on the opposite side, for the purpose of sustaining Governor Eyre, and it must be owned that it too had great names. Mr. Mill may be said to have led the one side, and Mr. Carlyle the other. The natural bent of each man's genius and temper turned him to the side of the Jamaica negroes, or of the Jamaica Governor. Mr. Tennyson, Mr. Kingsley, Mr. Ruskin, followed Mr. Carlyle; we know now that Mr. Dickens was of the same way of thinking. Mr. Herbert Spencer, Professor Huxley, Mr. Goldwin Smith, were in agreement with Mr. Mill. We have purposely omitted the names of politicians, whom any reader can range without difficulty according to his knowledge of their career and ways of thinking. No one needs to be told

that Mr. Bright took the side of the oppressed, and Mr. Disraeli that of authority. The case on either side may be briefly stated. We put out of consideration altogether the position taken up by only too many of those who proclaimed themselves advocates of Mr. Eyre, and who volunteered a line of defence on his behalf for which he would probably have given them little thanks. That was what some one at the time in blunt expressive words described as the "damned nigger" principle; the principle that any sort of treatment is good enough for negroes, and generally speaking serves them right. This kind of argument was very effective among considerable classes of persons, but it was not allowed to make its appearance much in public debate. In the House of Commons it never, at all events, got higher than the smoking-room; the reporters in the gallery were not allowed any opportunity of recording it. Perhaps, on the other side, we may fairly put out of our consideration the view of those who, having from the most benevolent motives identified themselves all their lives long with the cause of oppressed negroes, fell instinctively and at once into the ranks of any movement professing to defend a negro population. The more reasonable of those who supported Mr. Eyre did not concern themselves to vindicate the legality or even the justice of all that he had done. Lord Carnarvon, the new Colonial Secretary, frankly admitted that in his opinion acts of cruelty and injustice had been done during and after the rebellion. Many were quite willing to admit that the trial of Gordon had been irregular, and that his hasty execution was to be deplored. What they did contend was, that at a terrible crisis Mr. Eyre did the best he could; that he was confronted with the fearful possibility of a negro insurrection, where the whites were not one in twenty of the blacks, and where a moment's suc-

cess to the rebels might have put the life of every white man, and the honour of every white woman, at the mercy of furious mobs of savage negroes. "Say what you will," they urged, "he stamped out the rebellion. He acted illegally, because there was no time for being legal. He sanctioned unmerciful deeds, because he had to choose between mercy to murderous blacks and mercy to loyal and innocent whites. You complain of the flogging of black women; he was thinking of the honour and the lives of white women. He crushed the rebellion utterly; he positively frightened it into submission. He was dealing with savages; he took the only steps which could have saved the loyal people he had in charge from an orgy of cruelty and licentiousness. Had he stayed his hand a moment all was lost. Many things were done which we deplore; which we would not have done; which he would not have done, or sanctioned, if there were time to balance claims and consider nicely individual rights. But he saved the white population, and put down the insurrection; and we feel gratitude to him first of all."

Such is, we think, a fair statement of the case relied upon by the more reasonable of the defenders of Mr. Eyre. To this the opposite party answered that in fact the insurrection, supposing it to have been an insurrection, was all over before the floggings, the hangings, and the burnings set in. Not merely were the troops masters of the field, but there was no armed enemy anywhere to be seen in the field or out of it. They contended that men are not warranted in inflicting wholesale and hideous punishments merely in order to strike such terror as may prevent the possibility of any future disturbance. As an illustration of the curious ethical principles which the hour called forth, it may be mentioned that one of the best-instructed and ablest of the London journals distinctly contended that excess of

punishment would be fully justified as a means of preventing further outbreaks. "Consider," such was the argument, "what the horrors of a successful outbreak in Jamaica might be, or even of an outbreak successful for a few days; consider what blood its repression would cost even to the negroes themselves; and then say whether anyone ought to shrink from inflicting a few superfluous floggings and hangings if these would help to strike terror and make new rebellion impossible? Even the flogging of women—disagreeable work, no doubt, for English soldiers to have to do—if it struck terror into their husbands and brothers, and thus discouraged rebellion, would it too not be justified?" One cannot better deal with this argument than by pushing it just a little further. Suppose the burning alive of a few women and children seemed likely to have a deterrent effect on disloyal husbands and fathers generally, would it not be well to light the pile? What would the torture and death of a score or so of women and children be when compared with the bloodshed which such a timely example might avert? Yet any sane man would answer that rather than that he would brave any risk; and so we get to the end of the argument at once. We have only arrived at an acknowledgment of the fact that the repression of insurrection, like everything on earth, has its restraining moral code, which custom and civilisation, if there were nothing else, must be allowed to establish. The right of Englishmen to rule in Jamaica is a right which has to be exercised with, and not without, regard for human feelings and Christian laws. Not a few persons endeavoured to satisfy their own and the public conscience by praising the virtues of Governor Eyre's career, and casting aspersions on the character of the unfortunate Gordon. Professor Huxley disposed once for all of that sort of argument by the quiet remark that he knew of

no law authorising virtuous persons as such to put to death less virtuous persons as such.

The Report of the Commissioners was made in April, 1866. It declared in substance that the disturbances had their immediate origin in a planned resistance to authority, arising partly out of a desire to obtain the land free of rent, and partly out of the want of confidence felt by the labouring class in the tribunals by which most of the disputes affecting their interests were decided; that the disturbance spread rapidly, and that Mr. Eyre deserved praise for the skill and vigour with which he had stopped it in the beginning; but that martial law was kept in force too long; that the punishments inflicted were excessive; that the punishment of death was unnecessarily frequent; that the floggings were barbarous, and the burnings wanton and cruel; that although it was probable that Gordon, by his writings and speeches, had done much to bring about excitement and discontent, and thus rendered insurrection possible, yet there was no sufficient proof of his complicity in the outbreak, or in any organised conspiracy against the Government; and, indeed, that there was no wide-spread conspiracy of any kind. Of course this finished Mr. Eyre's career as a Colonial Governor. A new Governor, Sir J. P. Grant, was sent out to Jamaica, and a new Constitution was given to the island. The Jamaica Committee, however, did not let the matter drop there. They first called upon the Attorney-General to take proceedings against Mr. Eyre and some of his subordinates. The Government had, meanwhile, passed into Conservative hands, in consequence of events which have yet to be told; and the Attorney-General declined to prosecute. Probably a Liberal Attorney-General would have done just the same thing. Then the Jamaica Committee decided on pro-

secuting Mr. Eyre and his subordinates themselves. They took various proceedings, but in every case with the same result. We need not go into the history of these proceedings, and the many controversies, legal and otherwise, which they occasioned. The bills of indictment never got beyond the grand jury stage. The grand jury always threw them out. On one memorable occasion the attempt gave the Lord Chief Justice of England an opportunity of delivering the charge to the grand jury from which we have already cited some passages: a charge entitled to the rank of an historical declaration of the law of England, and the limits of the military power even in cases of insurrection. Mr. Carlyle found great fault with the Chief Justice for having merely laid down the law of England. "Lordship," he wrote, "if you were to speak for six hundred years, instead of six hours, you would only prove the more to us that, unwritten if you will, but real and fundamental, anterior to all written laws and first making written laws possible, there must have been, and is, and will be, coeval with human society from its first beginnings to its ultimate end, an actual martial-law of more validity than any other law whatever." The business of the Lord Chief Justice, however, was not to go in philosophical quest of those higher laws of which Mr. Carlyle assumed to be the interpreter. His was the humbler but more practical part to expound the laws of England, and he did his duty.

The prosecutions can hardly be said to have been without use which gave opportunity for this most important exposition from such high authority. But they had no effect as against Mr. Eyre. Even the Chief Justice, who exposed with such just severity the monstrous misuse of power which had been seen in Jamaica, still left it to the grand jury to say whether after all—considering the state

of things that prevailed in the island, the sudden danger, the consternation, and the confusion—the proceedings of the authorities, however mistaken, were not done honestly and faithfully in what was believed to be the proper administration of justice. After many discussions in Parliament, the Government in 1872—once again a Liberal Government—decided on paying Mr. Eyre the expenses to which he had been put in defending himself against the various prosecutions; and the House of Commons, after a long debate, agreed to the vote by a large majority. The Jamaica Committee were denounced by many voices, and in very unmeasured language, for what they had done. Yet no public body ever were urged on to an unpopular course by purer motives than those which influenced Mr. Mill and his associates. They were filled with the same spirit of generous humanity which animated Burke when he pressed the impeachment against Warren Hastings. They were sustained by a desire to secure the rights of British subjects for a despised and maltreated negro population. They were inspired with a longing to cleanse the name of England from the stain of a share in the abominations of that unexampled repression. Yet we do not think on the whole that there was any failure of justice. A career full of bright promise was cut short for Mr. Eyre, and for some of his subordinates as well; and no one accused Mr. Eyre personally of anything worse than a fury of mistaken zeal. The deeds which were done by his authority, or to which, when they were done, he gave his authority's sanction, were branded with such infamy that it is almost impossible such things could ever be done again in England's name. Even those who excused under the circumstances the men by whom the deeds were done, had seldom a word to say in defence of the acts themselves. The cruelties of that

CHAPTER L.

DRIVEN BACK ACROSS THE RUBICON.

THE Queen opened the new Parliament in person. She then performed the ceremony for the first time since the death of the Prince Consort. The speech from the throne contained a paragraph which announced that her Majesty had directed that information should be procured in reference to the right of voting in the election of members of Parliament, and that when the information was complete, "the attention of Parliament will be called to the result thus obtained, with a view to such improvements in the laws which regulate the right of voting in the election of members of the House of Commons as may tend to strengthen our free institutions, and conduce to the public welfare." Some announcement on the subject of Reform was expected by everyone. Nobody could have had any doubt that the new Government would at once bring forward some measure to extend the franchise. The only surprise felt was perhaps at the cautious and limited way in which the proposed measure was indicated in the royal speech. Some of the more extreme reformers thought there was something ominous in this way of opening the question. A mere promise to obtain information on the subject of the franchise appeared to be minimising as much as possible the importance of the whole subject. Besides, it was asked, what information is required more than we have already? Is this to be merely an investigation as to the number of persons whom this or that scale

of franchise would add to the constituencies? Is the character of the reform to be decided by the mere addition which it would make to the voters' lists rather than by the political principles which an extended franchise represents? Is there to be what Burke calls "a low-minded inquisition into numbers," in order that too many Englishmen should not be allowed the privilege of a vote?

There was something ominous, therefore, in the manner in which the first mention of the new Reform Bill was received, as well as in the terms of the announcement. Many circumstances too made the time unpropitious for such an undertaking. The cattle plague had broken out towards the close of the previous year, and had spread with most alarming rapidity. At the end of 1865 it was announced that about 80,000 cattle had been attacked by the disease, of which some 40,000 had died. From 6,000 to 8,000 animals were dying every week. The Government, the cattle-owners, and the scientific men, were much occupied in devising plans for the restriction of the malady. Some keen controversy had arisen over the Government proposals for making good the losses of the cattle-owners whose animals had to be killed in obedience to official orders to prevent the spread of disease. There were already rumours of the approach of that financial distress which was to break out shortly in disastrous commercial panic. Cholera was believed to be travelling ominously westward. There were threatened disturbances in Ireland and alarms about a gigantic Fenian conspiracy. It did not need to be particularly keen-eyed to foresee that there was likely soon to be a collision of irreconcileable interests on the Continent. There was uneasiness about Jamaica; there was uneasiness about certain English men and women who were detained as prisoners by Theodore, King of Abyssinia. Moreover the Parliament had

only just been elected, and a Reform Bill would mean a speedy dissolution, with a renewal of expense and trouble to the members of the House of Commons. Certainly the time did not seem tempting for a sudden revival of the reform controversy which had been allowed to sleep in a sort of Kyffhäuser cavern during the later years of Lord Palmerston's life.

Many Conservatives did not believe that the studied moderation of the announcement in the Queen's Speech could really be taken as evidence of a moderate intention on the part of the Ministry. While Radicals generally insisted that the strength of the old Whig party, "the Dukes," as the phrase went, had been successfully exerted to compel a compromise and keep Mr. Gladstone down, most of the Tories would have it that Mr. Gladstone now had got it all his own way, and that the cautious vagueness of the Queen's Speech would only prove to be prelude to very decisive and alarming changes in the constitution. Not since the introduction by Lord John Russell of the measure which became law in 1832, had a Reform Bill been expected in England with so much curiosity, with so much alarm, with so much disposition to a foregone conclusion of disappointment. On March 12 Mr. Gladstone introduced the bill. His speech was eloquent; but the House of Commons was not stirred. It was evident at once that the proposed measure was only a compromise; and a compromise of the most unattractive kind. The substance of the Government scheme may be explained in a single sentence. The bill proposed to reduce the county franchise from fifty pounds to fourteen pounds, and the borough franchise from ten to seven pounds. There was a savings' bank franchise, and a lodger franchise, but we need not discuss smaller details and qualifying provisions. The borough franchise of course was the central

question in any reform measure; and this was to be reduced by three pounds. The man who could be enthusiastic over such a reform must have been a person whose enthusiasm was scarcely worth arousing. The peculiarity of the situation was, that without a genuine popular enthusiasm nothing could be done. The House of Commons as a whole did not want reform. For one obvious reason, the House had only just been elected; members had spent money and taken much trouble; and they did not like the idea of having to encounter the risk and expense all over again almost immediately. All the Conservatives were of course openly and consistently opposed to reform; not a few of the professing Liberals secretly detested it. These latter would accept it and try to put on an appearance of welcoming it if popular excitement and the demeanour of the Government showed that they must be for it or against it. Only a small number of men in the House were genuine in their anxiety for immediate change; and of these the majority were too earnest and extreme to care for a reform which only meant a reduction of the borough franchise from ten pounds to seven pounds. It seemed a ridiculous anti-climax, after all the indignant eloquence about "unenfranchised millions," to come down to a scheme for enfranchising a few hundreds here and there. It was hard for ordinary minds to understand that a ten pounds' franchise meant servitude and shame, but a seven pounds' franchise was national liberty and salvation. All this for three pounds was a little too much for plain people to comprehend. The bill was founded on no particular principle; it merely said, "we have at present a certain scale of franchise; let us make it a little lower, and our successors if they feel inclined can keep on lowering it." No well-defined basis was reached; there seemed no reason why, if such a bill had been passed, some politician

might not move the session after for a bill to reduce the franchise a pound or two lower. Absolute finality in politics is of course unattainable, but a statesman would do well to see at least that a distinct and secure ledge is reached in his descent. He ought not to be content to slip a little way down to-day, and leave chance to decide whether he may not have to slip a little way further to-morrow.

The announcement made by the Government had only what is called in theatrical circles a *succès d'estime*. Those who believed in the sincerity and high purpose of Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone, and who therefore assumed that if they said this was all they could do there was nothing else to be done—these supported the bill. Mr. Bright supported it; somewhat coldly at first, but afterwards when warmed by the glow of debate and of opposition, with all his wonted power. It was evident, however, that he was supporting Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone rather than their Reform Bill. Mr. Mill supported the bill, partly no doubt for the same reason, and partly because it had the support of Mr. Bright. But it would have been hard to find anyone who said that he really cared much about the measure itself, or that it was the sort of thing he would have proposed if he had his way. There were public meetings got up of course in support of the bill, and the agitation naturally gathered heat as it went on. Mr. Gladstone became for a time a popular agitator on behalf of his measure, and stumped the country during the Easter holidays. It was during this political campaign that he made the famous speech in Liverpool, in which he announced that the Government had passed the Rubicon; had broken the bridge and burned the boats behind them. He truly had done so. His career was to be thenceforward as the path of an arrow in the direction of popular reform; but his Government had to

recross the Rubicon; to make use of the broken bridge somehow for the purposes of retreat.

Before, however, the delivery of this celebrated speech, the defects of the bill, and the lack of public interest in it, had produced their natural effect in the House of Commons. The moment it was evident that the public, as a whole, were not enthusiastic about the measure, the House of Commons began to feel that it could do as it pleased in the matter. It may seem rather surprising now that the Conservatives, or at least those of them who had foresight enough to know that some manner of change was inevitable, did not accept this trivial and harmless measure, and so have done with the unwelcome subject for some time to come. Many of the Conservatives, however, were not only opposed to all reform of the suffrage on principle, but were still under the firm belief that they could stave it off for their time. Others there were who honestly believed that if a change were inevitable it would be better for the good of the country that it should be something in the nature of a permanent settlement, and that there should not be a periodical revival of agitation incessantly perplexing the public mind. Others, too, no doubt, saw even already that there would be partisan chances secured by embarrassing the Government anyhow. Therefore the Conservatives as a man opposed the measure; but they had allies. Day after day saw new secessions of emboldened Whigs and half-hearted Liberals. The Thanes were flying from the side of the Government. Mr. Gladstone had announced his intention also to bring in a bill dealing with the redistribution of seats; but he preferred to take this after the Reform Bill. At once he was encountered by an amendment from his own side of the House, and from very powerful representatives of Whig family interest, calling on him to take the redistribution

scheme at once; to alter the rental to a rating franchise; to do all manner of things calculated to change the nature of the bill, or to interfere with the chances of its being passed into law. The Ministerial side of the House was fast becoming demoralised. The Liberal party was breaking up into mutinous camps and unmanageable coteries.

The fate of this unhappy bill is not now a matter of great historical importance. Far more interesting than the process of its defeat is the memory of the eloquence by which it was assailed and defended. One reputation sprang into light with these memorable debates. Mr. Robert Lowe was the hero of the Opposition that fought against the bill. He was the Achilles of the Anti-Reformers. His attacks on the Government had, of course, all the more piquancy that they came from a Liberal, and one who had held office in two Liberal administrations. The Tory benches shouted and screamed with delight, as in speech after speech of admirable freshness and vigour Mr. Lowe poured his scathing sarcasms in upon the bill and its authors. Even their own leader and champion, Mr. Disraeli, became of comparatively small account with the Tories when they heard Mr. Lowe's invectives against their enemies. Much of Mr. Lowe's success was undoubtedly due to the manner in which he hit the tone and temper of the Conservatives and of the disaffected Whigs. Applause and admiration are contagious in the House of Commons. When a great number of voices join in cheers and in praise, other voices are caught by the attraction, and cheer and praise out of the sheer infection of sympathy. It is needless to say that the applause reacts upon the orator. The more he feels that the House admires him, the more likely he is to make himself worthy of the admiration. The occasion told on Mr. Lowe. His form seemed, metaphorically at least, to grow greater and grander on that

scene, as the enthusiasm of his admirers waxed and heated. Certainly he never after that time made any great mark by his speeches, or won back any of the fame as an orator which was his during that short and to him splendid period. But the speeches themselves were masterly as mere literary productions. Not many men could have fewer physical qualifications for success in oratory than Mr. Lowe. He had an awkward and ungainly presence; his gestures were angular and ungraceful; his voice was harsh and rasping; his articulation was so imperfect that he became now and then almost unintelligible; his sight was so short that when he had to read a passage or extract of any kind, he could only puzzle over its contents in a painful and blundering way, even with the paper held up close to his eyes; and his memory was not good enough to allow him to quote anything without the help of documents. How, it may be asked in wonder, was such a speaker as this to contend in eloquence with the torrent-like fluency, the splendid diction, the silver-trumpet voice of Gladstone; or with the thrilling vibrations of Bright's noble eloquence, now penetrating in its pathos, and now irresistible in its humour? Even those who well remember these great debates may ask themselves in unsatisfied wonder the same question now. It is certain that Mr. Lowe has not the most distant claim to be ranked as an orator with Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Bright. Yet it is equally certain that he did for that season stand up against each of them, against them both; against them both at their very best; and that he held his own.

Mr. Disraeli was thrown completely into the shade. Mr. Disraeli was not, it is said, much put out by this. He listened quietly, perhaps even contemptuously, looking upon the whole episode as one destined to pass quickly away. He did not believe that Mr. Lowe was likely to be a peer of

Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Bright—or of himself—in debate. "You know I never made much of Lowe," he said in conversation with a political opponent some years after, and when Mr. Lowe's eloquence had already become only a memory. But for the time Mr. Lowe was the master-spirit of the Opposition to the Reform Bill. In sparkling sentences, full of classical allusion and of illustrations drawn from all manner of literatures, he denounced and satirized demagogues, democratic governments, and every influence that tended to bring about any political condition which allowed of an ominous comparison with something in Athenian history. Reduced to their logical and philosophical meaning, Mr. Lowe's speeches were really nothing but arguments for that immemorial object of desire, the government by the wise and good. They had nothing in particular to do with the small question in domestic legislation, as to whether seven pounds or ten pounds was to be the limit of a borough franchise. They would have been just as effective if used in favour of an existing seven pounds' qualification, and against a proposed qualification of six pounds fifteen shillings. Seven pounds, it might have been insisted, was just the low-water mark of the wise and good; any lower we shall have the rule of the unwise and the wicked. Nor did Mr. Lowe show how, if the fierce wave of democracy was rising in such terrible might, it could be dammed out by the retention of a ten pounds' franchise. His alarms and his portents were in amazing contrast to his proposed measures of safety. He hoped to bind Leviathan with packthread. Alaric was at the gates; Mr. Lowe's last hope was in the power of the Court of Chancery to serve the invader with an injunction. The simple-minded deputies who, during the *coup d'état* in Paris, went forth to meet the soldiers of the usurper with their scarfs of office, in the belief that they

could thus restrain them from violation of the constitutional law, were on a philosophical level with Mr. Lowe when he proclaimed to England that her ancient system must fall into cureless ruin and become the shame and scandal of all time, if she abandoned her last rampart, the ten pounds' franchise. But Mr. Lowe was embodying in brilliant sarcasm and vivid paradox the fears, prejudices, and spites, the honest dislikes and solid objections of a large proportion of English society. Trades' unions, strikes, rumours of political disaffection in Ireland, the angry and extravagant words of artizan orators and agitators in London; a steady hatred of all American principles; a certain disappointment that the American Republic had not fulfilled most men's predictions and gone to pieces—these and various other feelings combined to make a great many Englishmen particularly hostile to any proposals for political reform at that moment. Mr. Lowe was not merely the mouthpiece of all these sentiments, but he gave what seemed to be an overwhelming philosophical argument to prove their wisdom and justice. The Conservatives made a hero, and even an idol, of him. Shrewd old members of the party, who ought to have known better, were heard to declare that he was not only the greatest orator, but even the greatest statesman, of the day. In truth, Mr. Lowe was neither orator nor statesman. He had some of the gifts which are needed to make a man an orator, but hardly any of those which constitute a statesman. He was a literary man and a scholar, who had a happy knack of saying bitter things in an epigrammatic way; he really hated the Reform Bill, towards which Mr. Disraeli probably felt no emotion whatever, and he started into prominence as an anti-reformer just at the right moment to suit the Conservatives and embarrass and dismay the Liberal party. He was greatly detested for a

time amongst the working classes, for whose benefit the measure was chiefly introduced. He not only spoke out with cynical frankness his own opinion of the merits and morals of the people "who live in these small houses," but he implied that all the other members of the House held the same opinion, if they would only venture to give it a tongue. He was once or twice mobbed in the streets; he was strongly disliked and dreaded for the hour by the Liberals; he was the most prominent figure on the stage during these weeks of excitement; and no doubt he was perfectly happy.

The debates on the bill brought out some speeches which have not been surpassed in the Parliamentary history of our time. Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone were at their very best. Mr. Bright likened the formation of the little band of malcontents to the doings of David in the cave of Adullam when he called about him "every one that was in distress and every one that was discontented," and became a captain over them. The allusion told upon the House with instant effect, for many had suspected and some had said that if Mr. Horsman and Mr. Lowe had been more carefully conciliated by the Prime Minister at the time of his Government's formation, there might have been no such acrimonious opposition to the bill. The little third party were at once christened the Adullamites, and the name still survives and is likely long to survive its old political history. Mr. Gladstone's speech, with which the great debate on the second reading concluded, was aflame with impassioned eloquence. One passage, in which he met the superfluous accusation, that he had come over a stranger to the Liberal camp, was filled with a certain pathetic dignity. The closing words of the speech, in which he prophesied a speedy success to the principles then on the verge of defeat, brought the debate

fittingly up to its highest point of interest and excitement. "You cannot," he said in his closing words, "fight against the future. Time is on our side. The great social forces which move on in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of our debates does not for a moment impede or disturb—those great social forces are against you; they are marshalled on our side, and the banner which we now carry, though perhaps at this moment it may droop over our sinking heads, yet soon again will float in the eye of heaven, and it will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms perhaps not to an easy but to a certain and a not distant victory."

This speech was concluded on the morning of April 28. The debate which it brought to a close had been carried on for eight nights. The House of Commons was wrought up to a pitch of the most intense excitement when the division came to be taken. The closing passages of Mr. Gladstone's speech had shown clearly enough that he did not expect much of a triumph for the Government. The House was crowded to excess. The numbers voting were large beyond almost any other previous instance. There were for the second reading of the bill 318; there were against it 313. The second reading was carried by a majority of only five. The wild cheers of the Conservatives and the Adullamites showed on which "sword sat laurel victory." Everyone knew then that the bill was doomed. It only remained for those who opposed it to put a few amendments on the paper as a prelude to the bill's going into committee, and the Opposition must succeed. The question now was not whether the measure would be a failure, but only when the failure would have to be confessed.

The time for the confession soon came. The opponents of the reform scheme kept pouring in amendments on the

motion to go into committee. These came chiefly from the Ministerial side of the House. As in 1860, so now in 1866, the Conservative leader of the House of Commons had the satisfaction of seeing his work done for him very effectively by those who were in general his political opponents. He was not compelled to run the risk or incur the responsibility of pledging himself or his party against all reform in order to get rid of this particular scheme. All that he wanted was being done for him by men who had virtually pledged themselves over and over again in favour of reform. The bill at last got into committee; and here the strife was renewed. Lord Stanley moved an amendment to postpone the clauses relating to the county franchise until the redistribution of seats should first have been dealt with. This amendment was rejected, but not by a great majority. Mr. Ward Hunt moved that the franchise in counties be fourteen pounds rateable value, instead of gross estimated rental. This too was defeated. Lord Dunkellin, usually a supporter of the Government, moved that the seven pounds franchise in boroughs be on a rating instead of a rental qualification. The effect of this would be to make the franchise a little higher than the Government proposed to fix it. Houses are generally rated at a value somewhat below the amount of the rent paid on them, and therefore a rating franchise of seven pounds would probably in most places be about equivalent to a rental franchise of eight pounds. Therefore the opponents of reform would have interposed another barrier of twenty shillings in certain cases between England and the flood of democracy. Prudent and law-abiding men might accept with safety a franchise of eight pounds, or even say seven pounds ten shillings, in boroughs; but a franchise of seven pounds would mean the Red Republic, mob-rule, the invasion of democracy, the shameful victory, and all the

other terrible things which Mr. Lowe had been foreshadowing in his prophetic fury. Lord Dunkellin carried his amendment; 315 voted for it, only 304 against. The announcement of the numbers was received with tumultuous demonstrations of joy. The Adullamites had saved the State. Lord Russell's last reform scheme was a failure; and the Liberal Ministry had come to an end.

Lord Russell and his colleagues tendered their resignation to the Queen, and after a little delay and some discussion, the resignation was accepted. It would hardly have been possible for Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone to do otherwise. Their Reform Bill was the one distinctive measure of the session. It was the measure which especially divided their policy from that of Lord Palmerston's closing years. To abandon it would be to abandon their chief reason for being in office at all. They could not carry it. They had got as far in the session as the last few days of June, and everything was against them. The commercial panic had intervened. The suspension of the great firm of Overend and Gurney had brought failure after failure with it. The famous "Black Friday," Friday, May 11, had made its most disastrous mark in the history of the City of London. The Bank Charter had to be suspended. The cattle plague, although checked by the stringent measures of the Government, was still raging, and the landlords and cattle-owners were still in a state of excitement and alarm, and had long been clamouring over the insufficiency of the compensation which other classes condemned as unreasonable alike in principle and in proportion. The day before the success of Lord Dunkellin's motion, the Emperor of Austria had issued a manifesto explaining the course of events which compelled him to draw the sword against Prussia. A day or two after, Italy entered into the quarrel by declaring war against

Austria. The time seemed hopeless for pressing a small Reform Bill on in the face of an unwilling Parliament, and for throwing the country into the turmoil and expense of another general election. Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone accepted the situation, and resigned office.

The one mistake they had made was to bring in a Reform Bill of so insignificant and almost unmeaning a character. It is more than probable that the difficulties Lord Russell had with the Whig section of his Cabinet compelled him to compromise to a degree which his own inclinations and his own principles would not have approved, and to which Mr. Gladstone could only yield a reluctant assent. But if this be the explanation of what happened, it would have been better to put off the measure for a session or two, and allow public opinion out of doors to express itself so clearly as to convince the Whigs that the people in general were really in earnest about reform. No Reform Bill can be carried unless it is sustained by such an amount of enthusiasm among its supporters in and out of Parliament as to convince the timid, the selfish, and the doubting that the measure must be passed. In the nature of things the men actually in Parliament cannot be expected to enter with any great spontaneous enthusiasm into a project for sending them back to their constituencies to run the risk and bear the cost of a new election by untried voters. It will therefore, always be easy for the men in possession to persuade their consciences that the public good is opposed to any change, if no strong demand be made for the particular change in question. Now the compromise which Lord Russell's Government offered in the shape of a Reform Bill, was not calculated to stir up the enthusiasm of anyone. The ardour with which in the end it came to be advocated was merely the heat which in men's natures is

always generated by a growing controversy and by fierce opposition. The stronger and most effective attack made by the Opposition, that led by Mr. Lowe, was not directed against that particular measure so much as against all measures of reform; against the fundamental principle of a popular suffrage, and indeed of a representative assembly. As soon as the doubtful men in the House discovered that there was no genuine enthusiasm existing on behalf of the bill, its fate became certain. When the more extreme Reformers came to think over the condition of things, and when their spirits were set free from the passion of recent controversy, very few of them could have felt any great regret for the defeat of the bill. Those who understood the real feelings of the yet unenfranchised part of the population, knew well that some Administration would have to introduce a strong measure of reform before long. They were content to wait. The interval of delay proved shorter than they could well have expected.

The defeat of the bill and the resignation of the Ministry brought the political career of Lord Russell to a close. He took advantage of the occasion soon after to make a sort of formal announcement that he handed over the task of leading the Liberal party to Mr. Gladstone. He appeared indeed in public life on several occasions after his resignation of office. He took part sometimes in the debates of the House of Lords; he even once or twice introduced measures there, and endeavoured to get them passed. During the long controversies on the Washington Treaty and the claims of the United States, he took a somewhat prominent part in the discussions of the Peers, and was always listened to with attention and respect. About a year after the fall of his Administration he was one of the company at a breakfast given to Mr. Garrison, the American

Anti-Slavery leader, in St. James's Hall, and he won much applause there by the frankness and good spirit of his tribute to the memory of President Lincoln, and by his manly acknowledgment of more than one mistake in his former judgments of Lincoln's policy and character. Lord Russell spoke on this occasion with a vigour quite equal to that which he might have displayed some twenty years before; and indeed many of those present felt surprised at his resolve to abandon active public life while he still seemed so well capable of bearing a part in it. Lord Russell's career, however, was practically at an end. It had been a long and an interesting career. It was begun amid splendid chances. Lord John Russell was born in the very purple of politics; he was cradled and nursed among statesmen and orators; the fervid breath of young liberty fanned his boyhood; his tutors, friends, companions, were the master-spirits who rule the fortunes of nations; he had the ministerial benches for a training ground, and had a seat in the Administration at his disposal when another young man might have been glad of a seat in an opera box. He must have been brought into more or less intimate association with all the men and women worth knowing in Europe since the early part of the century. He was a pupil of Dugald Stewart at Edinburgh, and he sat as a youth at the feet of Fox. He had accompanied Wellington in some of his Peninsular campaigns; he measured swords with Canning and Peel successively through years of Parliamentary warfare. He knew Metternich and Talleyrand. He had met the widow of Charles Stuart, the young Chevalier, in Florence; and had conversed with Napoleon in Elba. He knew Cavour and Bismarck. He was now an ally of Daniel O'Connell, and now of Cobden and Bright. He was the close friend of Thomas Moore; he knew Byron, and

was one of the few allowed to read the personal memoirs, which were unfortunately destroyed by Byron's friends. Lord John Russell had tastes for literature, for art, for philosophy, for history, for politics, and his æstheticism had the advantage that it made him seek the society and appreciate the worth of men of genius and letters. Thus he never remained a mere politician like Pitt or Palmerston. His public career suggests almost as strange a series of contradictions, or paradoxes, as Macaulay finds in that of Pitt. He who began with a reputation for a heat of temperament worthy of Achilles was for more than half his career regarded as a frigid and bloodless politician. In Ireland he was long known rather as the author of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill than as the early friend of Catholic Emancipation; in England as the parent of petty and abortive Reform Bills, rather than as the promoter of the one great Reform Bill. Abroad and at home he came to be thought of as the Minister who disappointed Denmark and abandoned Poland, rather than as the earnest friend and faithful champion of oppressed nationalities. No statesman could be a more sincere and thorough opponent of slavery in all its forms and works; and yet in the mind of the American people, Lord Russell's name was for a long time associated with the idea of a scarcely concealed support of the slaveholders' rebellion. Much of this curious contrast, this seeming inconsistency, is due to the fact that for the greater part of his public life Lord Russell's career was a mere course of see-saw between office and opposition. The sort of superstition that long prevailed in our political affairs limited the higher offices of statesmanship to two or three conventionally acceptable men on either side. If not Sir Robert Peel then it must be Lord John Russell; if it was not Lord Derby it must be Lord Palmerston. Therefore if the

business of government was to go on at all, a statesman must take office now and then with men whom he could not mould wholly to his purpose, and must act in seeming sympathy with principles and measures which he would himself have little cared to originate. Lord Palmerston complained humourously in one of his later letters, that a Prime Minister could no longer have it all his own way in his Cabinet. Men were coming up who had wills and consciences, ideas and abilities of their own, and who would not consent to be the mere clerks of the Prime Minister. Great popular parties too, he might have added, were growing up in the country with powerful leaders, men whose opinions must be taken into account on every subject even though they never were to be in office. It is easy enough to understand how under such conditions the minister who had seemed a daring Reformer to one generation might seem but a chilly compromiser to another. It is easy too to understand how the career, which at its opening was illumined by the splendid victory of the Reform Bill of 1832, should have been clouded at its close by the rather ignominious failure of the Reform Bill of 1866. The personal life of Lord Russell was consistent all through. He began as a Reformer; he ended as a Reformer. If the "might have beens" were not always a vanity, it would be reasonable as well as natural to regret that it was not given to Lord Russell to complete the work of 1832 by a genuine and successful measure of Reform in 1866.

CHAPTER LI.

THE REFORM AGITATION.

THE Reform banner then had "drooped over the sinking heads" of Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone, and the Liberal Administration was at an end. The Queen, of course, sent for Lord Derby. There was no one else to send for. Somebody must carry on the Queen's government; and therefore Lord Derby had no alternative but to set to work and try to form an Administration. He did not appear to have done so with much good-will. He had no personal desire to enter office once again; he had no inclination for official responsibilities. He was not very fond of work, even when younger and stronger, and the habitual indolence of his character had naturally grown with years, and just now with infirmities. There was, therefore, something of a genuine patriotic self-sacrifice in the consent which he gave to relieve the Sovereign and the country from difficulties by accepting at such a time the office of Prime Minister, and undertaking to form a Government. It was generally understood, however, that he would only consent to be the Prime Minister of an interval, and that whenever with convenience to the interests of the State some other hand could be entrusted with power, he would expect to be released from the trouble of official life. The prospect for a Conservative Ministry was not inviting. Despite the manner in which Lord Russell's Reform Bill had been hustled out of existence, no sagacious Tory seriously be-

lieved that the new Government could do as Lord Palmerston had done; that is, could treat the whole Reform question as if it were shelved by the recent action of the House of Commons, and take no further trouble about it. Lord Derby, too, when he came to form a Government, found himself met by one unexpected difficulty. He had hoped to be able to weld together a sort of coalition Ministry, which should to a certain extent represent both sides of the House. It seemed to him only reasonable to assume that the men who had co-operated with the Conservatives so earnestly in resisting the Reform measures of the late Government, would consent to co-operate with the Conservative Ministry which their action had forced into existence. Accordingly, he had at once invited the leading members of the Adullamite party to accept places in his Administration. He was met by disappointment. The Adullamite chiefs agreed to decline all such co-operation. A leading article appeared one morning in a journal which was understood to have Mr. Lowe for one of its contributors, announcing in a solemn sentence made more solemn by being printed in capital letters, that those who had thrown out the Liberal Ministry on principle were bound to prove that they had not been animated by any ambition or self-seeking of their own. Indeed, the voice of public opinion freely acquitted some of them of any such desire from the beginning. Mr. Lowe, for example, was always thought to be somewhat uncertain and crotchety in his views. There were not wanting persons who said that he had no set and serious political opinions at all; that he was more easily charmed by antithesis than by principle; and that he would have been at any time ready to sacrifice his party to his paradox. But no one doubted his personal sincerity; and no one was surprised that he should have

declined to accept any advantage from the reaction of which he had been the guiding spirit. About the rest of the Adullamites, truth to say, very few persons thought at all. No one doubted their sincerity, for indeed no one asked himself any question on the subject. Some of them were men of great territorial influence; some were men of long standing in Parliament. But they were absolutely unnoticed now that the crisis was over. The reaction was ascribed to one man alone. There was some curiosity felt as to the course that one man would pursue; but when it was known that Mr. Lowe would not take office under Lord Derby, nobody cared what became of the other denizens of the Cave. They might take office or let it alone; the public at large were absolutely indifferent on the subject.

The session had advanced far towards its usual time of closing, when Lord Derby completed the arrangements for his Administration. Mr. Disraeli, of course, became Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. Lord Stanley was Foreign Secretary. Lord Cranbourne, formerly Lord Robert Cecil, was entrusted with the care of India; Lord Carnarvon undertook the Colonies; General Peel became War Minister; Sir Stafford Northcote was President of the Board of Trade; and Mr. Walpole took on himself the management of the Home Office, little knowing what a troublous business he had brought upon his shoulders. Sir John Pakington boldly assumed the control of the Admiralty, an appropriation of office to which only the epigram of a Beaumarchais could supply adequate illustration. On July 9 Lord Derby was able to announce to the Peers that he had put together his house of cards.

The new Ministry had hardly taken their places when a perfect storm of agitation broke out all over the country. The Conservatives and the Adullamites had both asserted

that the working people in general were indifferent about the franchise; and a number of organisations now sprang into existence, having for their object to prove to the world that no such apathy prevailed. Reform Leagues and Reform Unions started up as if out of the ground. Public meetings of vast dimensions began to be held day after day for the purpose of testifying to the strength of the desire for Reform. The most noteworthy of these was the famous Hyde Park meeting. The Reformers of the metropolis determined to hold a monster meeting in the Park. The authorities took the very unwise course of determining to prohibit it, and a proclamation or official notice was issued to that effect. The Reformers were acting under the advice of Mr. Edmond Beales, President of the Reform League, a barrister of some standing, and a man of character and considerable ability. Mr. Beales was of opinion that the authorities had no legal power to prevent the meeting; and of course it need hardly be said that a Commissioner of Police, or even a Home Secretary, is not qualified to make anything legal or illegal by simply proclaiming it so. The London Reformers, therefore, determined to try their right with the authorities. On July 23, a number of processions, marching with bands and banners, set out from different parts of London and made for Hyde Park. The authorities had posted notices announcing that the gates of the Park would be closed at five o'clock that evening. When the first of the processions arrived at the Park the gates were closed, and a line of policemen was drawn outside. The president of the Reform League, Mr. Beales, and some other prominent Reformers, came up in a carriage, alighted, and endeavoured to enter the Park. They were refused admittance. They asked for the authority by which they were refused; and they were told that it was the

authority of the Commissioner of Police. They then quietly re-entered the carriage. It was their intention first to assert their right, and then, being refused, to try it in the regular and legal way. It was no part of their intention to make any disturbance. They seem to have taken every step which they thought necessary to guard against any breach of the peace. It was clearly their interest, as it was no doubt their desire, to have the law on their side. They went to Trafalgar Square, followed by a large crowd, and there a meeting was extemporised, at which resolutions were passed demanding the extension of the suffrage, and thanking Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and other men who had striven to obtain it. The speaking was short; it was not physically possible to speak with any effect to so large an assemblage. Then that part of the demonstration came quietly to an end.

Meantime, however, a different scene had been going on at Hyde Park. A large and motley crowd had hung about the gates and railings. The crowd was composed partly of genuine Reformers, partly of mere sight-seers and curiosity-mongers, partly of mischievous boys, and to no inconsiderable extent of ordinary London roughs. Not a few of all sections, perhaps, were a little disappointed that things had gone so quietly off. Many of the younger lookers-on felt aggrieved exactly as the boys did, in the "Bride of Lammermoor," when they found that the supposed fire was not to end in any explosion after all, and that the castle had "gane out like an auld wife's spunk." The mere mass of people pressed and pressing round the railings would almost in any case have somewhat seriously threatened their security and tried their strength. Emerson has said that every revolution, however great, is first of all a thought in the mind of a single man. One disappointed Reformer linger-

ing in Park Lane, with his breast against the rails, as the poetic heroine had hers, metaphorically, against the thorn, became impressed with the idea that the barrier was somewhat frail and shaky. How would it be, he vaguely thought for a moment, if he were to give an impulse and drive the railing in? What, he wondered to himself, would come of that? The temptation was great. He shook the rails; the rails began to give way. Not that alone, but the sudden movement was felt along the line, and into a hundred minds came at once the grand revolutionary idea which an instant before had been a thought in the mind of one hitherto unimportant man. A simultaneous impulsive rush, and some yards of railing were down, and men in scores were tumbling, and floundering, and rushing over them. The example was followed along Park Lane, and in a moment half a mile of iron railing was lying on the grass, and a tumultuous and delighted mob were swarming over the Park. The news ran wildly through the town. Some thought it a revolt; others were of opinion that it was a revolution. The first day of liberty was proclaimed here—the breaking loose of anarchy was shrieked at there. The mob capered and jumped over the sward for half the night through. Flowerbeds and shrubs suffered a good deal, not so much from wanton destruction as from the pure boisterousness which came of an unexpected opportunity for horse-play. There were a good many little encounters with the police; stones were thrown on the one side and truncheons used on the other pretty freely; a detachment of foot guards was kept near the spot in readiness, but their services were not required. Indeed, the mob good-humouredly cheered the soldiers whenever they caught sight of them. A few heads were broken on both sides, and a few prisoners were made by the police; but there was no revolution, no revolt, no

serious riot even, and no intention in the mind of any responsible person that there should be a riot. Mr. Disraeli that night declared in the House of Commons—half probably in jest, half certainly in earnest—that he was not quite sure whether he had still a house to go to. He found his house yet standing, and firmly roofed, when he returned home that night. London slept feverishly, and awoke next day to find things going on very much as before. Crowds hastened, half in amusement half in fear, to look upon the scene of the previous evening's turmoil. There were the railings down sure enough; and in the park was still a large idle crowd, partly of harmless sight-seers, partly of roughs, with a considerable body of police keeping order. But there was no popular rising; and London began once more to eat its meals in peace. The sudden tumult was harmlessly over, and the one personage whose impulse first shook the railings of the Park may even now console himself in his obscurity by the thought that his push carried Reform.

Nothing can well be more certain than the fact that the Hyde Park riot, as it was called, convinced her Majesty's Ministers of the necessity of an immediate adoption of the reform principle. The Government took the Hyde Park riot with portentous gravity. Mr. Beales and some of his colleagues waited upon the Home Secretary next day, for the purpose of advising him to withdraw the military and police from the park, and leave it in the custody of the Reformers. Mr. Beales gravely lectured the Government for what they had done, and declared, as was undoubtedly the fact, that the foolish conduct of the Administration had been the original cause of all the disturbance. The Home Secretary, Mr. Walpole, a gentle and kindly man, had lost his head in the excitement of the hour. He mentally saw

himself charged with the responsibility of civil str bloodshed. He was melted out of all self-command kindly bearing of Mr. Beales and the Reformers, ar they assured him that they were only anxious to h to keep order, he fairly broke down and wept. pressed himself with meek gratitude for their pr co-operation, and agreed to almost anything the suggest. It was understood that the right of me Hyde Park was left to be tested in some more sati way at a future day, and the leaders of the Reform took their departure undoubted masters of the situa

All through the autumn and winter meetings we in the great towns and cities to promote the c reform. They were for the most part mere demons of numbers; and everyone of any sagacity knew p well that it was by display of numbers the greate would be produced upon the Ministry. Therefore th ings were usually preceded by processions, and th tion of the public was turned far more to the pro than to the meetings. Hardly anyone took the tr discuss what was said at the meetings; but a c public controversy was going on about the nu strength of the processions. A hundred witnesses sides of the dispute rushed to the newspapers testimony to the length of time which a particul cession had occupied in passing a given point. Ri culations were elaborately made to get at the nu persons marching which such a length of time i The most extraordinary differences of calculatic exhibited. It was a remarkable fact that the oppo reform saw invariably a much smaller gathering t supporters beheld. The calculations of the one

observers brought out only hundreds, where those of the other resulted in thousands. A procession which one critic proved by the most elaborate and careful statistics to have contained quarter of a million of men, a rival calculator was prepared to show could not by any possibility have contained more than ten or twelve thousand. Cooler observers than the professed partisans of one side or the other, thought that the most significant feature of these demonstrations was the part taken by the organised trades associations of working men. Some of the processions were made up exclusively of the members of these organised Trades Unions. They acted in strict deference to the resolutions and the discipline of their associations. They were great in numbers, and most imposing in their silent united strength. They had grown into all that discipline and that power unpatronised by any manner of authority; unrecognised by the law, unless indeed where the law occasionally went out of its way to try to prevent or to thwart the aims of their organisation. They had now grown to such strength that law and authority must see to make terms with them. The most extravagant rumours as to their secret doings and purposes alarmed the timid; and there can be no doubt that if a popular or social revolution were needed or were impending, the action taken by the working men's associations would have been of incalculable moment to the cause it espoused. As rank after rank of these men marched in quiet confidence through the principal streets of London, the thought must have occurred to many minds that here was an entirely new element in the calculations alike of statesmen and of demagogues, well capable of being made a new source of strength to a State under honest leadership and any really

sound system of legislation, but qualified also to become a source of serious public danger, if misled by the demagogue or unfairly dealt with by the reactionary legislator. Some of these associations had supported great industrial strikes in which the judgment and the sympathies of all the classes that usually lead was against them. The capitalist and all who share his immediate interests; the employers, the rich of every kind, the aristocratic, the self-appointed public instructors, had all been against them; and they had nevertheless gone deliberately and stubbornly their own way. Sometimes they, or the cause they represented, had prevailed; often they and it had been defeated; but they had never acknowledged a defeat in principle, and they had kept on their own course undismayed, and, as many would have put it, unconvinced and unreconciled. At this very time some of the doings of Trades Unions, or of those who took on themselves to represent the purposes of such organisations, were creating dismay in many parts of England, and were a subject of excited discussion everywhere over the country. It could not but be a matter of the gravest moment when the "organisation of labour," as it would once have been grandiloquently called, thus turned out of its own direct path and identified itself, its cause, its resources, and its discipline with any great political movement.

Thus in England the year passed away. Men were organising reform demonstrations on the one side and showing the futility of them on the other. The calculations as to the lengths of processions and the time occupied in passing particular street-corners or lamp-posts went on unceasing. Stout Tories vowed that the Government never would yield to popular clamour. Not a few timid Reformers

hoped in their secret hearts that Lord Derby would really stand fast. Many Liberals who could admit of no hope from the Tories, were already prepared with the conviction that the Government would risk all on the resolution to deny extended suffrage to the working classes. Not a few on both sides had a strong impression that Mr. Disraeli would do something to keep his friends in power, although they did not perhaps quite suspect that he was already engaged in the work of educating his party.

While England was thus occupied, stirring events were taking place elsewhere. In the interval between the resignation of Lord Russell and the completion of Lord Derby's Ministry, the battle of Sadowa had been fought. The leadership of Germany had been decisively won by Prussia. The "humiliation of Olmutz" had been avenged. Venetia had been added to Italy, Austria had been excluded from any share in German affairs, and Prussia and France had been placed in that position which M. Prevost-Paradol likened to that of two express trains starting along the same line from opposite directions. The complete overthrow of Austria came with the shock of a bewildering surprise upon the great mass of the English public. Faith in the military strength of Austria had survived even the evidence of Solferino. English public instructors were for the most part as completely agreed about the utter incapacity of the Prussians for the business of war as if nobody had ever heard of Frederick the Great. Not many days before Sadowa, a leading London newspaper had a description, half pitiful, half contemptuous, of the unfortunate shopboys and young mechanics of whom the Prussian army was understood to be composed, being hurried and driven along to the front to make food for powder for the well-trained

legions of Austria under the command of the irresistible Benedek.

Just before the adjournment of Parliament for the recess, a great work of peace was accomplished; perhaps the only work of peace then possible which could mentioned after the warlike business of Sadowa without producing the effect of an anticlimax. This was the completion of the Atlantic cable. On the evening of July 27, 1866, the cable was laid between Europe and America. Next day Lord Stanley, as Foreign Minister, was informed that perfect communication existed between England and the United States by means of the thread of wire that lay beneath the Atlantic. Words of friendly congratulation and greeting were interchanged between the Queen and the President of the United States. Ten years all but a month or two had gone by since Mr. Cyrus W. Field, the American promoter of the Atlantic telegraph project, had first tried to inspire cool and calculating men in London, Liverpool, and Manchester with some faith in his project. He was not a scientific man; he was not the inventor of the principle of inter-oceanic telegraphy; he was not even the first man to propose that a company should be formed for the purpose of laying a cable beneath the Atlantic. So long before as 1845 an attempt had been made by the Messrs. Brett to induce the English Government to assist them in a scheme for laying an electric wire to connect Europe with America. A plan for the purpose was actually registered; but the Government took no interest in the project, probably regarding it as on a par with the frequent applications which are made for the countenance and help of the Treasury in the promotion of flying machines and of projectiles to destroy an enemy's fleet at a thousand miles' distance. But

the achievement of the Atlantic cable was none the less as distinctly the work of Mr. Cyrus Field as the discovery of America was that of Columbus. It was not he who first thought of doing the thing; but it was he who first made up his mind that it could be done, and showed the world how to do it, and did it in the end. The history of human invention has not a more inspiriting example of patience living down discouragement, and perseverance triumphing over defeat. The first attempt to lay the cable was made in 1857; but the vessels engaged in the expedition had only got about three hundred miles from the west coast of Ireland when the cable broke, and the effort had to be given up for that year. Next year the enterprise was renewed upon a different principle. Two ships of war, the "Agamemnon," English, and the "Niagara," American, sailed out together for the Mid-Atlantic where they were to part company, having previously joined their cables, and were each to make for her own shore, each laying the line of wire as she went. Stormy weather arose suddenly and prevented the vessels from doing anything. The cable was broken several times in the effort to lay it, and at last the expedition returned. Another effort, however, was made that summer. The cable was actually laid. It did for a few days unite Europe and America. Messages of congratulation passed along between the Queen and the President of the United States. The Queen congratulated the President upon "the successful completion of the great international work," and was convinced that "the President will unite with her in fervently hoping that the electric cable which now connects Great Britain with the United States, will prove an additional link between the nations whose friendship is founded in their common interest and re-

ciprocal esteem." The rejoicings in America were exuberant. Suddenly, however, the signals became faint; the messages grew inarticulate, and before long the power of communication ceased altogether. The cable became a mere cable again; the wire that spoke with such a miraculous eloquence had become silent. The construction of the cable had proved to be defective, and a new principle had to be devised by science. Yet something definite had been accomplished. It had been shown that a cable could be stretched and maintained under the ocean more than two miles deep and two thousand miles across. Another attempt was made in 1865, but it proved again a failure, and the shivered cable had to be left for the time in the bed of the Atlantic. At last, in 1866, the feat was accomplished, and the Atlantic telegraph was added to the realities of life. It has now become a distinct part of our civilised system. We have ceased to wonder at it. We accept it and its consequent facts with as much composure as we take the existence of the inland telegraph or the penny post. It seems hard now to understand how people got on when it took a fortnight to receive news from the United States. Since the success of the Atlantic cable many telegraphic wires have been laid in the beds of oceans. All England chafed as at an insufferable piece of negligence on the part of somebody the other day, when it was found in a moment of national emergency that there was a lack of direct telegraphic communication between this country and the Cape of Good Hope, and that we could not ask a question of South Africa and have an answer within a few minutes. Perhaps it may encourage future projectors and inventors to know, that in the case of the Atlantic cable as in that of the Suez Canal, some of the highest scientific authority was

given to proclaim the actual hopelessness, the wild impracticability, the sheer physical impossibility of such an enterprise having any success. "Before the ships left this country with the cable," wrote Robert Stephenson in 1857, "I very publicly predicted as soon as they got into deep water a signal failure. It was in fact inevitable." Nine years after, the inevitable had been avoided; the failure turned to success.

CHAPTER LII.

THE LEAP IN THE DARK.

THE autumn and winter of agitation passed away, and the time was at hand when the new Ministry must meet a new session of Parliament. The country looked with keen interest, and also with a certain amused curiosity, to see what the Government would do with Reform in the session of 1867. When Lord Derby took office he had not in any way committed himself and his colleagues against a Reform Bill. On the contrary, he had announced that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to see a very considerable proportion of the now excluded class admitted to the franchise; but he had qualified this announcement by the expression of a doubt whether any measure of Reform on which the two great political parties could agree would be likely to satisfy the extreme Reformers, or to put a stop to agitation. More than once Lord Derby had intimated plainly enough that he was willing to make one other effort at a settlement of the question, but if that effort should not succeed he would have nothing more to do with the matter. He was well known to have taken office reluctantly, and he gave it to be clearly understood that he did not by any means propose to devote the remainder of his life to the business of rolling Reform Bills a little way up the Parliamentary hill merely in order to see them rolled down again. Most persons assumed, however, that Mr. Disraeli would look at the whole question from a different

point of view; that he had personal and natural ambition still to gratify; and that he was not likely to allow the position of his party to be greatly damaged by any lack of flexibility on his part. The Conservatives were in office, but only in office; they were not in power. The defection among the Liberals, and not their own strength or success, had set the Tories on the Ministerial benches. They could not possibly keep their places there without at least trying to amuse the country on the subject of Reform. The great majority of Liberals felt sure that some effort would be made by the Government to carry a bill, but their general impression was that it would be a measure cleverly put together with the hope of inducing the country to accept shadow for substance; and that nothing would come of it except an interval during which the demand of the unenfranchised classes would become more and more earnest and impassioned. It had not entered into the mind of anyone to conceive that Lord Derby's Government were likely to entertain the country by the odd succession of surprises which diversified the session, and to assist at the gradual formation, by contribution from all sides, sets, and individuals, of a Reform measure far more broadly liberal and democratic than anything which Lord Russel and Mr. Gladstone would have ventured or cared to introduce.

Parliament opened on February 5. The Speech from the Throne alluded, as everyone had expected that it would, to the subject of Reform. "Your attention," so ran the words of the speech, "will again be called to the state of the representation of the people in Parliament;" and then the hope was expressed that "Your deliberations, conducted in a spirit of moderation and mutual forbearance, may lead to the adoption of measures which, without unduly disturbing the balance of political power, shall freely extend the elec-

tive franchise." The hand of Mr. Disraeli, people said, was to be seen clearly enough in these vague and ambiguous phrases. How, it was asked, can the franchise be freely extended, in the Reformer's sense, without disturbing the balance of political power unduly, in Mr. Disraeli's sense? Again and again, in session after session, he had been heard arguing that a great enlargement of the suffrage to the working classes must disturb the balance of political power; that it would in itself be a disturbance of the balance of political power; that it would give an immense preponderance to a class "homogeneous"—such was Mr. Disraeli's own favourite word—in their interests and fashions. How then could he now offer to introduce any such change? And what other change did anyone want? What other change would satisfy anybody who wanted a change at all? More and more the conviction spread that Mr. Disraeli would only try to palm off some worthless measure on the House of Commons, and by the help of the insincere Reformers and the Adullamites, endeavour to induce the majority to accept it. People had little idea, however, of the flexibility the Government were soon to display. The history of Parliament in our modern days, or indeed in any days that we know much of, has nothing like the proceedings of that extraordinary session.

On February 11 Mr. Disraeli announced that the Government had made up their minds to proceed "by way of resolution." The great difficulty, he explained, in the way of passing a Reform Bill was that the two great political parties could not be got to agree beforehand on any principles by which to construct a measure. "Let us then, before we go to work at the construction of a Reform Bill this time, agree among ourselves as to what sort of measure we want. The rest will be easy." He, therefore, announced his intention

to put into the parliamentary caldron a handful of resolutions, out of which, when they had been allowed to simmer, would miraculously arise the majestic shape of a good Reform Bill made perfect. Mr. Disraeli relied greatly on the example afforded by the construction of the new system of government for India as an encouragement to the course he now recommended. We have seen that after the suppression of the Indian Mutiny there was much difficulty felt about the creation of a new scheme for the government of India. The House of Commons then agreed to proceed carefully by way of resolution in the first instance, and thus got the principles on which they proposed to govern India completely settled before they set about embodying them in practical legislation. Only the curious ingenuity of Mr. Disraeli's mind could have discovered any resemblance between the two cases. When Parliament had to take on itself the government of India, the first difficulty was to settle the principles on which India could best be governed. It was not a question of party; one party was as much in a difficulty as another; neither was pledged to any particular course. It was a time for consultation, for the hearing of all opinions, for the consideration and comparison of all testimonies and suggestions. It was, in short, a time of novelty and of uncertainty, when the only reasonable course was for the two great parties to take informal counsel before either committed itself to any defined scheme or even principle of action. What resemblance did such a condition of things bear to that in which Parliament found itself now that it had to consider the subject of an extended franchise? The difficulty arose not from a lack of knowledge, but from the existence of different opinions and different principles. All that could be got at in the way of information had been times out of mind showered out over the whole subject of

Reform. It had been discussed down to the very dregs in Parliament after Parliament. Neither of the two great political parties wanted more information of any kind, but both having long been in possession of all the information accessible to the quest of man, they were unable to agree as to the course which ought to be taken, and differed absolutely in their political principles. One party was pledged by its traditions and its supposed interests to oppose a popular suffrage; the other was pledged in exactly the same way to support it. What possible chance was there of a common ground being found by the discussion of a series of resolutions? If either party was willing to compromise, it had only to say so; two sentences would sufficiently explain what the compromise was to be. Each saw as distinctly as the other what it wanted to have; if either was willing to renounce any part of its supposed claim, it would be enough to say so. A suitor asks for a girl in marriage; her father refuses to consent. Would the two be brought any nearer to an agreement if they were to hold a solemn conference, and draw up a series of resolutions setting forth what in the opinion of each were the true conditions of a happy union? Just as well might Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Bright have set about drawing up a series of resolutions to embody what each thought of the conditions of a Reform Bill.

The resolutions which Mr. Disraeli proposed to submit to the House were for the most part sufficiently absurd. Some of them were platitudes which it could not be worth anyone's while to take the trouble of affirming by formal resolution. What advantage could there be in declaring by resolution that "it is contrary to the constitution of this realm to give to any one class or interest a predominating power over the rest of the community?" Who ever said, or

was likely to say, that to give one class a preponderating power over the rest of the community was in accordance with the principles of the Constitution? Even if Jack Cade were prepared to demand such a power for his own class, he would not take the trouble of trying to convince people that it could be done in conformity with the existing principles of the Constitution. To what purpose was the House of Commons invited to declare that in any redistribution of seats the main consideration should be "the expediency of supplying representation to places not at present represented, and which may be considered entitled to that privilege?" What other main consideration could any sane person have in preparing a scheme for the redistribution of seats? It would be as wise to recommend the judges of our civil courts to declare by a formal resolution, that their main consideration in hearing causes should be to allow litigants an opportunity of setting forth their claims and obtaining justice. But then on the other hand it has to be observed that most of the resolutions which were not simple truisms embodied propositions such as no Prime Minister could possibly have expected the House to agree on without violent struggles, determined resistance, and eager divisions. The principle of rating as a basis of qualification, the device of plurality of votes, the plan of voting by means of polling-papers—these were some of the propositions which Mr. Disraeli calmly suggested that the House should affirm along with the declarations that one party ought not to have all the power, and that the object of redistribution was to redistribute properly. The Liberal party, especially that section of it which acknowledged the authority of Mr. Bright, would have had to be beaten to its knees before it would consent to accept some of these devices.

Mr. Disraeli seems to have learned almost at once, from

the demeanour of the House, that it would be hopeless to press his resolutions. On February 25 he quietly substituted for them a sort of Reform Bill, which he announced that the Government intended to introduce. The occupation franchise in boroughs was to be reduced to six pounds, and in counties to twenty pounds, in each case the qualification to be based on rating; that is, the right of a man to vote was to be made dependent on the arrangements by his local vestry or other rate-imposing body. There were to be all manner of "fancy franchises." A man who had fifty pounds in the funds, or had thirty pounds in a savings' bank and had kept that amount untouched for a year, was to be rewarded with the vote. If he had given a ten-pound note to his daughter to buy her wedding clothes; or had laid out five pounds in the burial of a poor and aged parent; or lent a sovereign to a friend in distress, he would of course be disfranchised by his improvidence. If he paid twenty shillings in direct taxes during the year he was to have a vote. If he bore the degree of a University, or was a minister of religion, a lawyer, a doctor, or a certified schoolmaster, he was to have the franchise: a whimsical sort of educational franchise which would have refused a vote to Mr. Bright, Mr. Cobden, Mr. Mill, or to Mr. Disraeli himself. There seemed something unintelligible, or at least mysterious, about the manner in which this bill was introduced. It was to all appearance not based upon the resolutions; certainly it made no reference to some of the more important of their provisions. We need not go into the plan of redistribution which was tacked to the bill; for the bill itself never had any substantial existence. The House of Commons received with contemptuous indifference Mr. Disraeli's explanation of its contents, and the very next day Mr. Disraeli announced that the Government had determined

to withdraw it, to give up at the same time the whole plan of proceeding by resolution, and to introduce a real and substantial Reform Bill in a few days.

Parliament and the public were amazed at these sudden changes. The whole thing seemed turning into burlesque. The session had seen only a few days, and here already was a third variation in the shape of the Government's reform project. To increase the confusion and scandal it was announced three or four days after that three leading members of the Cabinet—General Peel, Lord Carnarvon, and Lord Cranbourne—had resigned. The whole story at last came out. The revelation was due to the "magnificent indiscretion" of Sir John Pakington, whose lucky incapacity to keep a secret has curiously enriched one chapter of the political history of his time. In consequence of the necessary reconstruction of the Cabinet, Sir John Pakington was transferred from the Admiralty to the War Office, and had to go down to his constituents of Droitwich for re-election. In the fulness of his heart he told a story which set all England laughing. The Government, it would appear, started with two distinct Reform Bills, one more comprehensive and liberal, as they considered, than the other. The latter was kept ready only as a last resource, in case the first should meet with a chilling reception from the Conservatism of the House of Commons. In that emergency they proposed to be ready to produce their less comprehensive scheme. A shopman sometimes offers a customer some article which he assures him is the only thing of the kind fit to have; but if the customer resolutely declares that its price is more than he will pay, the shopman suddenly remembers that he has something of the same sort on hand which although cheaper will, he has no doubt, be found to serve the purpose quite as well. So the chiefs of the Con-

servative Cabinet had their two Reform Bills in stock. If the House should accept the extensive measure, well and good; but in the event of their drawing back from it, there was the other article ready to hand, cheaper to be sure, and not quite so fine to look at, but a very excellent thing in itself, and warranted to serve every purpose. The more liberal measure was to have been strictly based on the resolutions. The Cabinet met on Saturday, February 23, and then, as Sir John Pakington said, he and others were under the impression that they had come to a perfect understanding; that they were unanimous; and that the comprehensive measure was to be introduced on Monday, the 25th. On that Monday, however, the Cabinet were hastily summoned together. Sir John rushed to the spot, and a piece of alarming news awaited him. Some leading members of the Cabinet had refused point blank to have anything to do with the comprehensive bill. Here was a coil! It was two o'clock. Lord Derby had to address a meeting of the Conservative party at half-past two. Mr. Disraeli had to introduce the bill, some bill, in the House of Commons at half-past four. Something must be done. Some bill must be introduced. All eyes, we may suppose, glanced at the clock. Sir John Pakington averred that there were only ten minutes left for decision. It is plain that no man, whatever his gift of statesmanship or skill of penmanship, can draw up a complete Reform Bill in ten minutes. Now came into full light the wisdom and providence of those who had hit upon the plan of keeping a second-class bill, if we may use such an expression, ready for emergencies. Out came the second-class bill, and it was promptly resolved that Mr. Disraeli should go down to the House of Commons and gravely introduce that, as if it were the measure which the Government had all along had it in their minds to bring forward.

Sir John defended that resolution with simple and practical earnestness. It was not a wise resolve, he admitted; but who can be certain of acting wisely with only ten minutes for deliberation? If they had had even an hour to think the matter over, he had no doubt, he said, that they would not have made any mistake. But what skills talking?—they had not an hour, and there was an end of the matter. They had to do something; and so Mr. Disraeli brought in his second-class measure; the measure which Sir John Pakington's piquant explanation sent down into political history with the name of "the Ten Minutes' Bill."

The trouble arose, it seems, in this way. General Peel at first felt some scruples about the original measure, the comprehensive bill. Lord Cranbourne pressed him to give the measure further consideration, and General Peel consented. So the Cabinet broke up on the evening of Saturday, February 23, in seeming harmony. Next day, however, being Sunday, Lord Cranbourne, having probably nothing else to do, bethought him that it would be well to look a little into the details of the bill. He worked out the figures, as he afterwards explained, and he found that according to his calculation they would almost amount to household suffrage in some of the boroughs. That would never do, he thought; and so he tendered his resignation. This would almost, as a matter of course, involve other resignations too. Therefore there came the hasty meeting of the Cabinet on Monday, the 25th, which Sir John Pakington described with such unconscious humour. Lord Cranbourne, and those who thought with him, were induced to remain, on condition that the comprehensive bill should be quietly put aside, and the ten minutes' bill as quietly substituted. Unfortunately, the reception given to the ten minutes' bill was, as we have told already, utterly discouraging. It was clear

to Mr. Disraeli's experienced eye that it had not a chance from either side of the House. Mr. Disraeli made up his mind, and Lord Derby assented. There was nothing to be done but to fall back on the comprehensive measure. Unwilling colleagues must only act upon their convictions and go. It would be idle to secure their co-operation by persevering farther with a bill that no one would have. Therefore it was that on February 26 Mr. Disraeli withdrew his bill of the day before, the ten minutes' bill, and announced that the Government would go to work in good earnest, and bring in a real bill on March 18. This proved to be the bill based on the resolutions; the comprehensive bill, which had been suddenly put out of sight at the hasty meeting of the Cabinet on Monday, February 25, as described in the artless and unforgotten eloquence of Sir John Pakington's Droitwich speech. Then General Peel, Lord Carnarvon, and Lord Cranbourne resigned their offices. Lord Carnarvon explained that he did not object to have the franchise lowered, but he objected to a measure which seemed to him to leave all the political power divided between the rich and the poor, reducing to powerlessness the influence of all the intervening classes. The objection of Lord Cranbourne has already been explained. General Peel, a man of straightforward, honourable character, and good abilities, was opposed to what he regarded as the distinctly democratic character of the bill. For the second time within ten years a Conservative Cabinet had been split up on a question of Reform and the Borough Franchise.

It must be owned that it required some courage and nerve on Mr. Disraeli's part to face the House of Commons with another scheme and a newly-constructed Cabinet, after all these surprises. The first thing to do was to reorganise the Cabinet by getting a new War Secretary, Colonial

Secretary, and Secretary for India. Before March 8 this was accomplished. The men who had resigned carried with them into their retirement the respect of all their political opponents. During his short administration of India, Lord Cranbourne had shown not merely capacity, for that everyone knew he possessed, but a gravity, self-restraint, and sense of responsibility, for which even his friends had not previously given him credit. Sir John Pakington, as we have already mentioned, became War Minister, Mr. Corry succeeding him as First Lord of the Admiralty. The Duke of Buckingham—the Lord Chandos whose maiden speech, in the great debate of Thursday, June 25, 1846, which closed the Peel Administration, Mr. Disraeli has described in his "Lord George Bentinck"—became Colonial Secretary. The administration of the India Department was transferred to Sir Stafford Northcote, whose place at the head of the Board of Trade thus vacated was taken by the Duke of Richmond.

Then, having thrown their mutineers overboard, the Government went to work again at their Reform scheme. On March 18 Mr. Disraeli introduced the bill. As regarded the franchise, this measure proposed that in boroughs all who paid rates, or twenty shillings a year indirect taxation, should have the vote; and also that property in the funds and savings' banks, and so forth, should be honoured with the franchise; and that there should be a certain educational franchise as well. The clauses for the extension of the franchise were counterbalanced and fenced around with all manner of ingeniously devised qualifications to prevent the force of numbers among the poorer classes from having too much of its own way. There was a disheartening elaborateness of ingenuity in all these devices. The machine was far too daintily adjusted; the checks and balances were too

cleverly arranged by half; it was apparent to al
eye that some parts of the mechanism would in
out of working order, and that some others woul
into it. Mr. Bright compared the whole schem
for offering something with one hand and quietl
ing it with the other. There was, however, on
the situation which to many Reformers seeme
hopeful. It was plain to them now that the C
were determined to do anything whatever in or
Reform Bill of some kind passed that year. T
have anything which could command a majority
nothing. Lord Derby afterwards frankly admit
did not see why a monopoly of Reform should b
Liberals; and Mr. Disraeli had clearly made u
that he would not go out of office this time on a
How little idea some of his colleagues had of w
were drifting may be understood from a speec
Lord Stanley on March 5, after the resignati
Cranbourne and the others. If, he said, Mr. L
of those who sat near him, believed seriously "t
intention of the Government to bring in a bill wh
in accordance with the view which has always b
and so consistently advocated by the member f
ham (Mr. Bright), they are greatly mistaken."
seen before long that the Government consente
measure going much farther in the direction of
than anything that had been ably and consistentl
by the member for Birmingham. Mr. Disraeli hi
not possibly have had any idea at first of the leng
he would be induced to go. He told Lord Cranl
with especial emphasis, at one stage of the d
the Government would never introduce househ
pure and simple. The bill became in the end

to establish household suffrage pure and simple in the towns.

The leading spirits of the Government were now determined to carry a Reform Bill that session, come what would. They were partly influenced, no doubt, by the conviction that it was better to settle the question on some terms, once for all, and let the country have done with it. But, as they themselves avowed more than once, they were also influenced by the idea that if the country would have Reform, the men in office might as well keep in office and give it to them. This is not high-minded statesmanship, to be sure; but high-minded statesmanship not uncommonly conducts men out of office, instead of keeping them in it. One by one, all Mr. Disraeli's checks, balances, and securities were abandoned. The dual vote, a proposal to give a double voting power in boroughs to a ratepaying occupier who also paid 20*s.* of assessed taxes, was laughed out of the bill. The voting-paper principle was abandoned. The fancy franchises were swept clear away. A lodger franchise was introduced. At last it came to a struggle about the nature of the main franchise in boroughs. The bill fixed it that anyone rated to the relief of the poor in a borough should have the vote, provided that he had lived two years in the house for which he was rated. An amendment, reducing the two years of qualification to one, was carried in the teeth of the Government by a large majority. The Government, therefore, agreed to accept the amendment. At various stages of the bill Mr. Disraeli kept announcing that if this or that amendment were carried against the Government, the Government would not go any farther with the bill; but when the particular amendment was carried, Mr. Disraeli always announced that Ministers had changed their minds after all, and were willing to accept the new alteration. At last this little piece

of formality began to be regarded by the Hou
ceremonial. The borough franchise was now
household suffrage with a qualification; but that
was one of great importance. If Mr. Disraeli co
in inducing the House to admit the qualificatio
have good reason to say that he had kept his
Lord Cranbourne, and that he had not consent
household suffrage pure and simple. The clau
stood excluded from the franchise the compo
holder. The compound householder figures la
debates of that session. The controversialists o
battled for him, and around him, like the Greeks
fighting round the body of Patroclus. He spr
into prominence and into history. He and his
the theme of discussion and conversation
Those who did not know what the compound
was could not possibly have understood the Ref
of 1867. The story goes that a witty public man
by a French friend to explain who the compo
holder was, described him as the male of the *f*
prise. The compound householder in plain f
occupier of one of the small houses the tenan
were not themselves rated to the relief of the
certain Acts of Parliament the owners of small
allowed to compound for their rates. The landl
himself responsible to the parochial authorities,
tenant. He paid up the rates on a number of
ments, and he received a certain reduction in c
of his assuming the responsibility and savin
authorities the trouble of collecting by pay
amounts in a lump sum. As a matter of fact it
be said that the occupier did actually pay the ra
landlord took good care to add the amount in

the rent he demanded; but the occupier's name did not appear on the ratebook, nor had he any direct dealing with the parish authorities. The compound householders were so numerous that they were said actually to constitute two-thirds of all the occupiers under 10*l*. In some boroughs, it was stated, an occupier's franchise excluding compound householders would suddenly reduce with sweeping hand the number of existing voters, and the Reform Bill of Lord Derby's Government would be a disfranchising, instead of an enfranchising, measure.

A meeting of the Liberal party was held at Mr. Gladstone's house to decide upon the course which should be taken. Mr. Gladstone had a device of his own to meet the difficulty. His idea was that a line should be drawn, below which houses should not be rated in any form; but that in every case where a house was rated, the occupier should be entitled to a vote, whether he or his landlord paid the rates. Mr. Gladstone was anxious that the very poorest occupiers should at once be relieved of the obligation to pay rates, and not allowed to give a vote. He, and Mr. Bright as well, were haunted by the fear of carrying the vote down too low in the social scale, and introducing to the franchise that class which Mr. Bright described as the *residuum* of the constituency. Now it must be remembered that the Liberal party, if they acted together, could command a majority. They were, therefore, in a position to compel Mr. Disraeli to adopt the principle recommended by Mr. Gladstone. But a remarkable difference of opinion suddenly sprang up. After the meeting at Mr. Gladstone's house a group made up principally of the more advanced Liberals began to doubt the advantage of Mr. Gladstone's proposed low-water line. They thought it would be better to let all householders in

boroughs have the vote without distinction. They held a meeting of their own in the tea-room of the House of Commons, and they resolved to inform Mr. Gladstone that they could not support his amendment. They were known from that time forth as the "Tea-Room Party;" and they came in for nearly as much condemnation as if they had been concerned in a new Gunpowder Plot. By their secession Mr. Gladstone's scheme was defeated, and it was made certain that there were not to be two classes of householders, the rated and the unrated, in the boroughs. A bold attempt was made then to get rid of the compounding system altogether; and at length, to the surprise of all parties, the Government yielded to the pressure. They undertook to abolish the system absolutely, to have the name of every occupier put on the rate-book, to give every occupier the vote, and, in a word, to establish household suffrage pure and simple in the borough constituencies. The Tea-Room Party had conquered both ways. They had prevailed against Mr. Gladstone, and prevailed over Mr. Disraeli.

Many hard words, as we have said, were flung at the Tea-Room Party. Mr. Bright denounced them in severe and scornful language, and asked what could be done in Parliamentary politics if every man was to pursue his own little game? "A costermonger and donkey," Mr. Bright said, "would take a week to travel from here to London" (he was addressing a meeting in Birmingham); "and yet, by running athwart the London and North-Western line, they might bring to total destruction a great express train." "Thus," he went on to say, "very small men, who during their whole political lives have not advanced the question of Reform by one hair's-breadth, or by one moment in time, can at a critical hour like this throw themselves athwart the objects

of a great party, and mar, it may be, a great measure that ought to affect the interests of the country beneficially for all time." The Tea-room Party ventured, no doubt, upon a serious Parliamentary responsibility when they thus struck out a little policy for themselves independently of their leaders. Yet it can hardly be questioned now that they were in the right as regards their principle. It was a great advantage to get rid of all complications, and all various graduations of franchise, and come at once to the intelligible point of household suffrage. As Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright had themselves admitted and argued at various stages of the debates, it was decidedly objectionable to have the question of franchise mixed up with varying parochial arrangements of any kind, and left to depend on the views of a vestry here and a vestry there. Nor were the Tea-room Party mutineers who by their conduct had enabled the enemy to triumph. On the contrary, they were at the worst only adventurous volunteers who at some risk had won a more decided victory over the enemy than their regular chiefs once ventured to think possible. Certain of them were, perhaps, a little inclined to give themselves airs, because of the risk they had run and the success they had won. But it is only justice to some of them at least to say, that they had acted from deliberate calculation as well as from a sense of duty. They were convinced that the Government, if pressed, would give in to anything rather than allow the bill to be defeated; and they thought they saw a sudden and secure opportunity for establishing the borough franchise at once on the sound and simple basis of household suffrage.

The struggle now was practically over. The bill had become from a sham a reality; from unmeaning complica-

tion it had grown into straightforward clearness. It accomplished a great purpose by establishing a sound principle. It had gone much farther in the way of pure democracy than Mr. Bright had ever proposed, or probably ever desired, to go. During the discussions Mr. Mill introduced an amendment to admit women who were registered occupiers as well as men to the franchise; in other words, to make the qualification one of occupation only, without reference to sex. The majority of the House were at first disposed to regard this proposition as something merely droll, and to deal with it only in the spirit of pleasantry, and with facetious commentary; but the debate proved a very interesting, grave, and able discussion, and it was the opening of a momentous chapter of political controversy. Mr. Mill got seventy-three members to follow him into the lobby; and although 196 voted the other way, he was probably well content with the result of the debate. He also raised the question of the representation of minorities, but he did not press it to any positive test. It had, however, a certain distinct triumph before the completion of the measure. When the bill went up to the House of Lords, Lord Cairns moved an amendment to the effect that in places returning three members no elector should vote for more than two. This amendment was carried, although Mr. Disraeli had announced beforehand that the Government thought such an arrangement would be "erroneous in principle and pernicious in practice;" and although it had been strongly opposed by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. The new principle, it will be seen, acknowledges the propriety of securing a certain proportion of representation to minorities. In a constituency with three representatives each elector votes for only two. Obviously, then, the third is the representative of a minority.

It does not by any means follow, however, that he is always the representative of a minority differing in political opinions from the majority. In some of the constituencies to which the bill gave three members, it so happens that there is a majority of one way of thinking large enough to secure the return of all three members. There are electors enough of one party to secure a majority to the two candidates who are especially popular, and yet to spare as many votes as will enable them to carry a third candidate also. Thus the new principle does not in practice always accomplish the object for which it was intended. Indeed, it is plain that in the very instances in which the advocates of the representation of minorities would most desire to secure it—those of places where the minority had before no chance of obtaining any expression of their views—they would still have little chance under the new arrangement, and would be most easily overborne by combination, discipline, and skill on the part of the majority. The new arrangement was of moment, however, as the first recognition of a principle which may possibly yet have a fuller development, and which if it does can hardly fail to have a serious effect on the present system of government by party. One or two clauses of some importance, not bearing on the general question of Reform, were introduced. It was established that Parliament need not dissolve on the death of the Sovereign, and that members holding places of profit from the Crown need not vacate their seats on the acceptance of another office; on their merely passing from one department to another. This was a reasonable and judicious alteration. It is of great importance that when a member of Parliament joins an Administration, he should give his constituents an opportunity of saying whether they are

content to be represented by a member of the Government. But when they have answered that question in the affirmative, it can hardly be necessary to undergo the cost and trouble of a new election if their representative happens to be transferred from one office to another. A constituency may have good reason for refusing to elect a member of the Administration; but they can hardly have any good reason for rejecting a Secretary for the Colonies whom they were willing to retain as their representative while he was Secretary for India. We are glad, however, that the change in the law was not made a little sooner. History could ill have spared Sir John Pakington's speech at his re-election for Droitwich.

The Reform Bill passed through its final stage on August 15, 1867. We may summarise its results thus concisely. It enfranchised in boroughs all male householders rated for the relief of the poor, and all lodgers resident for one year, and paying not less than 10*l.* a year rent; and in counties, persons of property of the clear annual value of 5*l.*, and occupiers of lands or tenements paying 12*l.* a year. It disfranchised certain small boroughs, and reduced the representation of other constituencies; it created several new constituencies; among others the borough of Chelsea and the borough of Hackney. It gave a third member to Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Leeds; it gave a representative to the University of London. It enacted that where there were to be three representatives, each elector should vote for only two candidates; and that in the City of London, which has four members, each elector should only vote for three. The Irish and Scotch Reform Bills were put off for another year. We may, however, anticipate a little, and dispose of the Scotch and Irish Bills

at once, the more especially as both, but especially the Irish Bill, proved to be very trivial and unsatisfactory. The Scotch Bill gave Scotland a borough franchise the same as that of England; and a county franchise based either on 5*l.* clear annual value of property, or an occupation of 14*l.* a year. The Government proposed at first to make the county occupation franchise the same as that in England. All qualification as to rating for the poor was, however, struck out of the bill by amendments, the rating systems of Scotland being unlike those of England. The Government then put in 14*l.* as the equivalent of the English occupier's 12*l.* rating franchise. Some new seats were given to Scotland, which the Government at first proposed to get by increasing the number of members of the House of Commons, but which they were forced by amendments to obtain by the disfranchisement of some small English boroughs. The Irish Bill is hardly worth mentioning. It left the county franchise as it was, 12*l.*, reduced the borough franchise from 8*l.* to 4*l.*, and did nothing in the way of redistribution.

While the English Reform Bill was passing through its several stages, the Government went deliberately out of their way to make themselves again ridiculous with regard to the public meetings in Hyde Park. The Reform League convened a public meeting to be held in that park on May 6. Mr. Walpole, on May 1, issued a proclamation intended to prevent the meeting, and warning all persons not to attend it. The League took legal advice, found that their meeting would not be contrary to law, and accordingly issued a counter-proclamation asserting their right, and declaring that the meeting would be held in order to maintain it. The Government found out a little too late that the League

had strict law on their side. The law gave to the Crown control over the parks, and the right of prosecuting trespassers of any kind; but it gave the Administration no power to anticipate trespass from the holding of a public meeting, and to prohibit it in advance. The meeting was held; it was watched by a large body of police and soldiers; but it passed over very quietly, and indeed to curious spectators looking for excitement seemed a very humdrum sort of affair. Mr. Walpole, the Home Secretary, who had long been growing weary of the thankless troubles of his office at a time of such excitement, and who was not strong enough to face the difficulties of the hour, resigned his post. Mr. Walpole retained, however, his seat in the Cabinet. "He will sit on these benches," said Mr. Disraeli, in announcing to the House of Commons his colleague's resignation of the Home Office; "and although not a minister of the Crown, he will be one of her Majesty's responsible advisers." He was a man highly esteemed by all parties; a man of high principle and of amiable character. But he was not equal to the occasion when any difficulty arose, and he contrived to put himself almost invariably in the wrong when dealing with the Reform League. He exerted his authority at a wrong time, and in a wrong way; and he generally withdrew from his wrong position in somewhat too penitent and humble an attitude. He strained too far the authority of his place, and he did not hold high enough its dignity. He was succeeded in office by Mr. Gathorne Hardy, who left the Poor Law Board to become Home Secretary.

The Reform Bill then was passed. The "Leap in the Dark" was taken. Thus did the Prime Minister, Lord Derby, describe the policy of himself and his colleagues.

The phrase has become historical, and its authorship is invariably ascribed to Lord Derby. It was in fact Lord Cranbourne who first used it. During the debates in the House of Commons he had taunted the Government with taking a leap in the dark. Lord Derby adopted the expression, and admitted it to be a just description of the movement which he and his Ministry had made. It is impossible to deny that the Government acted sagaciously in settling the question so promptly and so decisively; in agreeing to almost anything rather than postpone the settlement of the controversy even for another year. But one is still lost in wonder at the boldness, the audacity, with which the Conservative Government threw away in succession every principle which they had just been proclaiming essential to Conservatism, and put on Radicalism as a garment. On a memorable occasion Mr. Disraeli said that Peel caught the Whigs bathing, and walked away with their clothes. Now he himself had ventured on a still less scrupulous act of spoliation. He helped to turn the Whigs out of their clothes in order that he might get into the garments. Nothing could have been more surprising than the courage with which he undertook the series of transformations, unless, perhaps, the elaborate simplicity with which towards the end he represented himself as one who was acting in the truest spirit of consistency. Few could help being impressed, or at least imposed upon, by the calm earnestness of his declarations. Juvenal's Greek deceived the very eyesight of the spectators by the cleverness of his personation. Mr. Disraeli was almost equally successful. The success was not, perhaps, likely to conduce to an exalted political morality. The one thing, however, which most people were thinking of in the autumn of 1867 was that the

Reform question was settled at last, and for a long time. Nothing more would be heard of the unenfranchised millions and the noble working man, on the one hand; of the swart mechanic's bloody hand and the reign of anarchy, on the other. Mr. Lowe is entitled to the last word of the controversy. The working men, the majority, the people who live in the small houses, are enfranchised; "we must now," Mr. Lowe said, "at least educate our new masters."

CHAPTER LIII.

THE FENIAN MOVEMENT.

THE session of Parliament which passed the Reform Bill was not many days over when the country was startled by the news that a prison van had been stopped and broken open under broad day in Manchester, and two political prisoners rescued from the custody of the police. The political prisoners were Fenians. We have spoken already of the Fenian movement as one of the troubles now gathering around the path of successive Governments. It was at an early period of Lord Russell's administration that the public first heard anything substantial about the movement. On February 16, 1866, Parliament was surprised not a little by an announcement which the Government had to make. Lord Russell told the House of Lords, and Sir George Grey announced to the House of Commons, that the Government intended to suspend the *Habeas Corpus* Act in Ireland, and that both Houses of Parliament were to be called together next day for the purpose of enabling the Ministry to carry out this resolve. The next day was Saturday, an unusual day for a Parliamentary sitting at any early part of the session; unusual, indeed, when the session had only just begun. The Government could only excuse such a summons to the Lords and Commons on the plea of absolute urgency; and the word soon went round in the lobbies that a serious discovery had been made; and that a conspiracy of a formidable nature was preparing a rebellion in Ireland.

The two Houses met next day, and a measure was introduced to suspend the *Habeas Corpus* Act in Ireland, and give the Lord-Lieutenant almost unlimited power to arrest and detain suspected persons. The measure was run through its three readings in both Houses in the course of the day. The House of Lords had to keep up their sitting until the document should arrive from Osborne to authorise the Commissioners to give the Queen's assent to the bill. The Lords, therefore, having discussed the subject sufficiently to their satisfaction at a comparatively early hour of the evening, suspended the sitting until eleven at night. They then resumed, and waited patiently for the authority to come from Osborne, where the Queen was staying. Shortly before midnight the needful authority arrived, and the bill became law at twenty minutes before one o'clock on Sunday morning.

It seems almost superfluous to say that such a bill was not allowed to pass without some comment, and even some opposition, in the House of Commons. Mr. Bright made a speech which has always since been regarded as in every sense one of the very finest he ever delivered. That was the speech in which he declared his conviction that "if the majority of the people of Ireland, counted fairly out, had their will and had the power, they would unmoor the island from its fastenings in the deep, and move it at least two thousand miles to the west." That was in itself a sufficiently humiliating confession for an English statesman to have to make. It was not humiliating to Mr. Bright personally; for he had always striven to obtain such legislation for Ireland as should enable her to feel that hers was a friendly partnership with England, and not a compulsory and unequal connection. But it was humbling to any Englishman of spirit and sense to have to acknowledge

that after so many years and centuries of experiment and failure, the Government of England had not yet learned the way to keep up the connection between the countries without coercion acts and measures of repression in Ireland. No Englishman who puts the question fairly to his conscience will deny that if he were considering a matter that concerned a foreign country and a foreign Government, he would regard the mere fact as a condemnation of its system of rule. It would be idle to try to persuade him that it was all the fault of the Poles if the Russians had to govern by mere force in Poland; all the fault of the Venetians if the Austrians could never get beyond a mere encampment in Venetia. His strong common sense, unclouded in such a case by prejudice, would at once enable him to declare with conviction, that where, after long trial, a State cannot govern a population except by sheer force, the cause must be sought in the badness of the governing system rather than in the perversity of human nature among the governed. Mr. Mill, who spoke in the same debate, put the matter effectively enough when he observed that if the captain of a ship, or the master of a school, has continually to have recourse to violent measures to keep crew or boys in order, we assume, without asking for further evidence, that there is something wrong in his system of management. Mr. Mill dwelt with force and justice on one possible explanation of the difficulty which English Governments seem always to encounter in Ireland. He spoke of the "eternal political *non possumus*" which English statesmen opposed to every special demand for legislation in Ireland; a *non possumus* which, as he truly said, only means, "We don't do it in England."

The *Habeas Corpus* Act was, therefore, suspended once more in Ireland. The Government acknowledged that they

had to deal with a new rebellion in that co
rebellion this time might have sprung up from
so suddenly did the knowledge of it seem tc
upon the vast majority of the public here. Y
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such a movement, and it soon proved to be for
degree which not many even then suspected.

The Fenian movement differed from nearly
movements of the same kind in Ireland, in th
arose and grew into strength without the patr
help of any of those who might be called the na
of the people. In 1798 and in 1848 the rebell
mistakably what may be called the "follow
character. Some men of great ability, or stre
pose, or high position, or all attributes comb
themselves leaders, and the others followed.
rising had the impulse of almost intolerable
well as national grievance; but it is doubtful
formidable and organised movement might hav
but for the leadership of such men as Wolf
Lord Edward Fitzgerald. In 1848 there were st
as the traditional leadership of Smith O'Brien,
able purpose of Mitchel, and the impassioned
Meagher. But Fenianism seemed to have sp
the very soil of Ireland itself. Its leaders wer
high position, or distinguished name, or pr
They were not of aristocratic birth; they were
they were not powerful writers. It was not
of the American Civil War that engendered
although that war had great influence on th
which Fenianism shaped its course. Fenianis
in existence, in fact, although it had not got
name, long before the American War created

of Irishmen — the Irish-American soldiers — to turn their energies and their military inclination to a new purpose.

Agitation in the form of secret association had never ceased in Ireland. One result of prosecutions for seditious speaking and writing in Ireland is invariably the encouragement of secret combination. Whether it be right or wrong, necessary or unnecessary, to prosecute for seditious speaking or writing in Ireland, is not a matter with which we have to concern ourselves when we make this statement. We state a fact which cannot be controverted. It is assuredly a fact to be taken into the gravest consideration by those who are entrusted with the maintenance of order. It ought at least to impress them with a sense of the necessity for being cautious how they run the risk of Government prosecutions for mere indiscretions of pen or tongue. "When popular discontents are abroad," said Curran, condemning the policy of the Irish Administration of his day, "a wise Government would put them into a hive of glass; you hid them." The suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, in consequence of the 1848 movement, led, as a matter of course, to secret association. Before the trials of the Irish leaders were well over in that year, a secret association was formed by a large number of young Irishmen in cities and towns. It was got up by young men of good character and education; it spread from town to town; it was conducted with the most absolute secrecy; it had no informer in its ranks. It had its oath of fidelity and its regular leaders, its nightly meetings, and even to a limited and cautious extent its nightly drillings. It was a failure, because in the nature of things it could not be anything else. The young men had not arms enough anywhere to render them formidable in any one place; and the necessity of carrying on their communications with different towns in

profound secrecy, and by round-about ways of communication, made a prompt concerted action impossible. After two or three attempts to arrange for a simultaneous rising had failed, or had ended only in little abortive and isolated ebullitions, the young men became discouraged. Some of the leaders went to France, some to the United States, some actually to England; and the association melted away. That was the happiest end it could possibly have had. Concerted action would only have meant the useless waste of a few scores or hundreds of brave young lives. Some years after this, the "Phœnix" clubs began to be formed in Ireland. They were for the most part associations of the peasant class, and were on that account, perhaps, the more formidable and earnest; for the secret association of which we have already spoken was mainly the creation of young men of a certain culture who felt ashamed and disappointed that the Young Ireland movement should have ended without a more gallant display of arms. The Phœnix clubs led to some of the ordinary prosecutions and convictions; and that was all. Up to that time it did not seem to have entered into the mind of any official English statesman that such things might possibly be a consequence and not a cause. It was thought enough to put them down and punish them when they came. It was accounted an offence against law and order hardly less flagrant than that of the secret agitators themselves to ask whether, perhaps, there was not some real cause for all this agitation, with which serious statesmanship could easily deal if it only took a little honest thought and trouble. After the Phœnix associations came the Fenians. "This is a serious business now," said a clever English literary man when he heard of the Fenian organisation; "the Irish have got hold of a good name this time; the Fenians will last." The Fenians are

said to have been the ancient Irish militia. In Scott's "Antiquary," Hector M'Intyre, jealous for the honour and the genuineness of Ossian's songs of Selma, recites a part of one in which Ossian asks St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, whether he ventures to compare his psalms "to the tales of the bare-armed Fenians." There can be no doubt that the tales of the bare-armed Fenians were passed from mouth to mouth of the Celts in Ireland and the highlands of Scotland, from a time long before that at which any soothsayer or second-sighted sage could have dreamed of the landing of Strongbow and the perfidy of the wife of Breffni. There was an air of Celtic antiquity and of mystery about the name of Fenian which merited the artistic approval given to it by the impartial English writer whose observation has just been quoted. The Fenian agitation began about 1858, and it came to perfection about the middle of the American Civil War. It was ingeniously arranged on a system by which all authority converged towards one centre, and those farthest away from the seat of direction knew proportionately less and less about the nature of the plans. They had to obey instructions only, and it was hoped that by this means weak or doubtful men would not have it in their power prematurely to reveal, to betray, or to thwart the purposes of their leaders. A convention was held in America, and the Fenian Association was resolved into a regular organised institution. A provisional government was established in the neighbourhood of Union Square, New York, with all the array and the mechanism of an actual working administration. Soon after this there began to be frequent visitations of mysterious strangers to Ireland.

The emigration of the Irish to America had introduced an entirely new element into political calculations. One of

the men of 1848, who took refuge in the United States at first, and who afterwards went to Canada and became very influential there, wrote home from New York to say that "we have the long arm of the lever here." There was much truth in this view of the state of things. The Irish grew rapidly in numbers and in strength all over the United States. The constitutional system adopted there enabled them almost at once to become citizens of the Republic. They availed themselves of this privilege almost universally. The American political system, whatever may be thought of its various merits or defects, is peculiarly adapted to fill the populations with a quick interest in politics. There are undoubtedly certain classes among the wealthier who are so engrossed in money-making and in business as to have little time left to trouble themselves about politics; and there are many who, out of genuine or affected distaste for noisy controversy and the crowd, hold aloof deliberately from all political organisations. But the working part of the community, especially in the cities, are almost invariably politicians. Every election, every political trial of strength, has its practical beginning at the primary meetings of the electors of each place. These meetings are attended largely, one might almost say mainly, by the humbler classes of voters. From the primary meeting to the fall elections, and from the ordinary fall elections to the choice of the President, the system is so adjusted as to take the humblest voter along with it. The Irish working man, who had never probably had any chance of giving a vote in his own country, found himself in the United States a person of political power, whose vote was courted by the leaders of different parties, and whose sentiments were flattered by the wire-pullers of opposing factions. He was not slow to appreciate the value of this influence in its bearing

on that political question which in all the sincerity of his American citizenship was still the dearest to his heart—the condition of Ireland. In the United States—we do not say in Canada—the differences between Irishmen of different religions and factions have not much interfered with their views on purely Irish questions. Dislike of England, or at least of English governments, prevails among many Irishmen from the northern province settled in the United States, who assuredly, if they had remained at home, would have brought up their children in devotion to English rule and the traditions of the house of Orange. But of course the vast, the overwhelming majority of the Irish in America is made up of men who have come from the provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, and whose anti-English sentiments have only become stronger and stronger in proportion to the length of time and distance that divided them from their old home. If it were to be distinctly declared that every Irishman in the United States was in his heart an enemy of England, there might probably be found instances enough the other way to discredit the literal accuracy of the assertion. But we know with what contempt Dr. Johnson spoke of the literal accuracy which replied to the statement that a certain orchard contained no fruit, by showing that it actually had three apples and four pears. To all who do not insist on that sort of accuracy it will be proper to say that, speaking generally, all the Irish population in the United States is animated by feelings of hostility to English dominion in Ireland. Filled with this feeling the Irish in the States made their political organisations the means of keeping up a constant agitation, having for its object to secure the co-operation of American parties in some designs against England. One of the great political parties into which the Northern States were divided made

it a part of their electioneering business to conciliate the Irish vote in the populous cities. They professed great affection for Ireland and sympathy with Irish grievances; they gave the word of order to their American followers to patronise the Irish; their leaders were often to be seen on the platform at Irish meetings; the municipal authorities of some of the great towns took part in the Irish processions on St. Patrick's Day; more than once the American Mayor of an American city exhibited himself arrayed in garments of green on that anniversary. The Irish vote was at one time absolutely necessary to the democratic party in the States; and the democratic party were ready to give a seeming countenance to any scheme which happened for the moment to allure the hopes of the Irish populations. After the Civil War the feelings of almost all the political parties in the States, in the South as well as in the North, were hostile to England. At such a moment, and under such a condition of things, it cannot be matter of surprise if the hopes of the Irish populations were excited to the highest degree. The confidence felt by so many persons in this country that the *Alabama* controversy had been dropped for ever by American statesmen, had not the slightest support from the bearing or resolve of any of the great American parties. It is quite easy to imagine a condition of things just then, which would have led a light-hearted American president to try to bring together all classes of the American population in a war against England. The length of the almost indefensible Canadian frontier line would have given America the immense advantage of being able to choose her own battle-ground. Such a war would at one time have been welcomed with enthusiasm all over the States. The objections of calm and cautious minds would have been borne down and swept away in a

very wave of popular passion. It is not surprising if, under such circumstances, many of the Fenian leaders in America should have thought it easy to force the hand of the Government, and to bring on a war with England. At all events, it is not surprising if they should have believed that the American Government would put forth little effort to prevent the Fenians from using the frontier of the United States as a basis of operations against England.

The Civil War had introduced a new figure to the world's stage. This was the Irish-American soldier. He had the bright, humorous countenance of the Celt, with the peculiar litheness and military swagger of the American "boy in blue." He had some of the American shrewdness grafted on to his Irish love of adventure. In thousands of cases he spoke with an American accent, and had never set foot on the soil of that Ireland from which his fathers came, and which, to do him justice, he loved with a passion at once romantic and sincere. He might have fought for the North, or he might have fought for the South. He might have ranged himself under the colours borne by Thomas Francis Meagher—"Meagher of the Sword"—or he might have followed the fearless lead of "Pat Cleburne." Perhaps he was one of the Irish brigade who joined in the desperate charges up the heights of Fredericksburg; or perhaps he was one of the equally brave men who successfully held those heights for the South. It was all the same when the interests of Ireland came to be concerned: he was ready to forget all differences in a companionship on that question. Many of these men—thousands of them—were as sincerely patriotic in their way as they were simple and brave. It is needless to say that they were fastened on in some instances by adventurers, who fomented the Fenian movement out of the merest and the meanest self-seeking. Men swaggered

about Union Square, New York, as Fenian leaders, who had not the faintest notion of risking their own valuable lives in any quarrel more dignified than a bar-room row in the Sixth Ward—the "Big Sixth" of New York. Some were making a living out of the organisation—out of that, and apparently nothing else. The contributions given by poor Irish hack-drivers and servant girls, in the sincere belief that they were helping to man the ranks of an Irish army of independence, enabled some of these self-appointed leaders to wear fine clothes and to order expensive dinners. Of course something of this kind is to be said of every such organisation. It is especially likely to be true of any organisation got up in a country like America, where the field of agitation is open to everybody alike, with little of authority or prescription to govern the taking of places. But in the main, it is only fair to say that the Fenian movement in the United States was got up, organised, and manned by persons who, however they may have been mistaken as to their ends and misguided as to their means, were single-hearted, unselfish, and faithfully devoted to their cause. It is necessary that this should be said somewhat emphatically; for the mind of the English public has always been curiously misled with regard to the character of the Fenian organisation. In this, as in other instances, the public conscience of England has too often been lulled to sleep by the assurance that all who reject the English point of view must be either fools or knaves, and that there is no occasion for sensible men to take any account of their demands or their protestations. It may be well, too, to emphasize the fact that the plans of the Fenians were not by any means the fantastically foolish projects that it is the custom here to believe them. They resembled in some respects the projects of the Polish insurgents, which we have described in another chapter of

this work. Like the Polish schemes they were founded on calculations which did not turn out as might have been expected, but which, nevertheless, might very easily have come right. The Polish rebellion was started in the hope that some of the European powers would come to the help of Poland; and no European power did come to its help. But there was at one time, as we know now, a very great chance indeed that such help would be strongly given. The Fenian rising was inspired by the hope that the United States and England would be at war; and we know now that they were more than once on the very verge of war. It is, we believe, quite certain that the officers were already named by the American authorities who were to have conducted an invasion of Canada. Those who did not happen to have known America and American life in the days shortly after the close of the Civil War, can have hardly any idea of the bitterness of feeling against England that prevailed then all over the States, in the South just as much as in the North. If the English Government had peremptorily and absolutely rejected the idea of arbitration with regard to the *Alabama* claims, at any time between 1865 and 1868, it is all but certain that America would have declared war. An American invasion of Canada would have made a Fenian rising in Ireland a very different trouble from that which under the actual conditions it afterwards proved to be.

Meanwhile there began to be a constant mysterious influx of strangers into Ireland. They were strangers who for the most part had Celtic features and the bearing of American soldiers. They distributed themselves throughout the towns and villages; most of them had relatives or old friends here and there, to whom they told stories of the share they had had in the big wars across the Atlantic and of the prepara-

tions that were making in the States for the accomplishment of Irish independence. All this time the Fenians in the States were filling the columns of friendly journals with accounts of the growth of their organisation and announcements of the manner in which it was to be directed to its purpose. After a while things went so far that the Fenian leaders in the United States issued an address, announcing that their officers were going to Ireland to raise an army there for the recovery of the country's independence. Of course the Government here were soon quite prepared to receive them; and indeed the authorities easily managed to keep themselves informed by means of spies of all that was going on in Ireland. The spy system was soon flourishing in full force. Every considerable gathering of Fenians had amongst its numbers at least one person who generally professed a yet fiercer devotion to the cause than any of the rest, and who was in the habit of carrying to Dublin Castle every night his official report of what his Fenian colleagues had been doing. It is positively stated that in one instance a Protestant detective in the pay of the Government actually passed himself off as a Catholic, and took the Sacrament openly in a Catholic church in order to establish his Catholic orthodoxy in the eyes of his companions. One need not be a Catholic in order to understand the grossness of the outrage which conduct like this must seem to be in the eyes of all who believe in the mysteries of the Catholic faith. Meanwhile the Head Centre of Fenianism in America, James Stephens, who had borne a part in the movement of 1848, arrived in Ireland. He was arrested in company of Mr. James Kickham, the author of many poems of great sweetness and beauty; a man of pure and virtuous character. Stephens was committed to Richmond Prison, Dublin, early in November, 1865; but before many days had passed the

country was startled by the news that he had contrived to make his escape. The escape was planned with skill and daring. For a time it helped to strengthen the impression on the mind of the Irish peasantry that in Stephens there had at last been found an insurgent leader of adequate courage, craft, and good fortune.

Stephens disappeared for a moment from the stage. In the meantime disputes and dissensions had arisen among the Fenians in America. The schism had gone so far as to lead to the setting up of two separate associations. There were of course distracted plans. One party was for an invasion of Canada; another pressed for operations in Ireland itself. The Canadian attempt actually was made. A small body of Fenians, a sort of advance-guard, crossed the Niagara river on the night of May 31, 1866, occupied Fort Erie, and drove back the Canadian volunteers who first advanced against them. For a moment a gleam of success shone on the attempt; but the United States enforced the neutrality of their frontier line with a sudden energy and strictness wholly unexpected by the Fenians. They prevented any further crossing of the river, and arrested several of the leaders on the American side. The Canadian authorities hurried up reinforcements; several Fenians were taken and shot; others recrossed the river, and the invasion scheme was over.

Then Stephens came to the front again. It was only for a moment. He had returned to New York, and he now announced that he was determined to strike a blow in Ireland. Before long the impression was spread abroad that he had actually left the States to return to the scene of his proposed insurrection. The American-Irish kept streaming across the Atlantic, even in the stormy winter months, in the firm belief that before the winter had passed away, or

at the farthest while the spring was yet young, Stephens would appear in Ireland at the head of an insurgent army. Not many, surely, of those actually living in Ireland could have had any faith in the possibility of such a movement having even a momentary success on Irish soil. All who knew anything of the condition of the country must have known that the peasantry were unarmed, and utterly unprepared for any such attempt; that the great majority of the populations everywhere were entirely opposed to such wild enterprises; that the Catholic clergy especially were endeavouring everywhere to keep their people back from secret organisation or insurrectionary scheme. But the Irish-Americans, who had made their way into Ireland, were for the most part not acquainted with the condition of the country; and it was owing to their presence and their influence that at length an attempt at rebellion was actually made. Stephens did not reappear in Ireland. He made no attempt to keep his warlike promise. He may be said to have disappeared from the history of Fenianism. But the preparations had gone too far to be suddenly stopped. Many of his followers were filled with shame at the collapse of the enterprise on which they had risked so much, and they were impatient to give some sign of their personal energy and sincerity. It was hastily decided that something should be done. One venture was a scheme for the capture of Chester Castle. The plan was that a sufficient number of the Fenians in England should converge towards the ancient town of Chester, should suddenly appear there on a given day in February, 1867, capture the castle, seize the arms they found there, cut the telegraph wires, make for Holyhead, but a short distance by rail, seize on some vessels there, and then steam for the Irish coast. The Government were fully informed of the plot in advance; the police were

actually on the look-out for the arrival of strangers in Chester, and the enterprise melted away. In March, 1867, an attempt at a general rising was made in Ireland. It was a total failure; the one thing on which the country had to be congratulated was that it failed so completely and so quickly as to cause little bloodshed. Every influence combined to minimise the waste of life. The snow fell that spring as it had scarcely ever fallen before in the soft, mild climate of Ireland. Silently, unceasingly it came down all day long and all night long; it covered the roads and the fields; it made the gorges of the mountains untenable, and the gorges of the mountains were to be the encampments and the retreats of the Fenian insurgents. The snow fell for many days and nights, and when it ceased falling the insurrectionary movement was over. The insurrection was literally buried in that unlooked-for snow. There were some attacks on police barracks in various places—in Cork, in Kerry, in Limerick, in Tipperary, in Louth; there were some conflicts with the police; there were some shots fired, many captures made, a few lives lost; and then for the time at least all was over. The Fenian attempt thus made had not from the beginning a shadow of hope to excuse it. Every patriotic Irishman of whatever party must have felt a sense of relief when it was evident that the insurrection was over and that so little harm had been done.

There was, however, much feeling in England as well as in Ireland for some of the Fenian leaders who now began to be put upon their trials. They bore themselves with manliness and dignity. Some of them had been brave soldiers in the American Civil War, and were entitled to wear honourable marks of distinction. Many had given up a successful career or a prosperous calling in the United States to take part in what they were led to believe would

be the great national uprising of the Irish people. They spoke up with courage in the dock, and declared their perfect readiness to die for what they held to be a sacred cause. They indulged in no bravado and uttered no word of repining. All manhood should have deserted the English heart if the English people did not acknowledge some admiration for such men. Many did acknowledge such admiration freely and generally. The newspaper in London which most of all addresses itself to the gratification of the popular passion of the hour, frankly declared that the Fenian leaders were entitled to the respect of Englishmen because they had given such earnest of their sincerity, and such proof that they knew how to die. One of the leaders, Colonel Burke, who had served with distinction in the army of the Southern Confederation, was sentenced to death in May, 1867. A great public meeting was held in St. James's Hall, London, to adopt a memorial praying that the sentence might not be carried out. Among those who addressed the meeting was Mr. Mill. It was almost altogether an English meeting. The hall was crowded with English working men. The Irish element had hardly any direct representation there. Yet there was absolute unanimity, there was intense enthusiasm, in favour of the mitigation of the sentence on Colonel Burke and his companions. The great hall rang with cheer after cheer as Mr. Mill, in a voice made stronger than its wont by the intensity of his emotions, pleaded for a policy of mercy. It is satisfactory to be able to say that the voice of that great meeting was heard in the ministerial councils, and that the sentence of death was not inflicted.

Not many months after this event the world was roused to amazement by the news of the daring rescue of Fenian prisoners in Manchester. Two Fenian prisoners, named

Kelly and Deasy, were being conveyed in the prison van from one of the police courts to the borough gaol to await further examination. On the way the van was stopped by a number of armed Fenians, who demanded the surrender of the prisoners. They surrounded the van, and endeavoured to break in the door of it. The door was locked on the inside, and the key was in the keeping of a police officer, Brett, who sat within. A shot was fired at the keyhole, probably in the hope of blowing off the lock—this was the opinion of one at least of the police who gave evidence—and poor Brett was just in the way of the bullet. The unfortunate policeman, who was only preparing to do his duty bravely by refusing to give up his charge, and by defending his position to the last, received a wound of which he died soon after. The doors were then opened, a woman prisoner in the van handing out the keys which she found in the pocket of the unfortunate officer; and the prisoners were rescued. "Kelly, I'll die for you!" was the exclamation heard to be uttered by one of the Fenian rescuers. He kept his word.

The rescue was accomplished; the prisoners were hurried away, and were never after seen by English officials. The principal rescuers died for them. Several men were put on their trial for the murder of Brett. Five were found guilty; their names were Allen, Larkin, O'Brien, Condon or Shore, and Maguire. Allen was a young fellow—a mere lad under twenty. The defence was that the prisoners only meditated a rescue, and that the death of the policeman was but an accident. It should be said, also, that each of those who avowed having taken part in the rescue, denied that he had fired the fatal shot. Legally, of course, this would have availed them nothing. Shots were fired. Those who take part in an unlawful assemblage for an unlawful

purpose, become responsible for the acts of their confederates. But it is worth noting as a fact that the men who gloried in the rescue, and died glorying in it, declared to the last that they had not fired the shot which killed Brett. All the five were sentenced to death. Then followed an almost unprecedented occurrence. One of the five, Maguire, had simply pleaded in his defence that he had been arrested by mistake; that he never was near the spot on the day of the rescue; that he was a loyal private in the Marines, and no Fenian; that he never knew anything about the plot or heard of it until he was arrested. The jury convicted him along with all the others. But the reporters for the press had been so struck with the apparent genuineness of the man's defence, that they took the unprecedented step of joining in a memorial to the Government, expressing their conviction that in his case the finding of the jury was a mistake. The Government made enquiry, and it was found that Maguire's defence was a truth, and that his arrest was a mere blunder. He received a pardon at once, that being the only way in which he could be extricated from the effect of the mistaken verdict. Naturally the news of this singular miscarriage of justice threw a great doubt on the soundness of the verdict in the other cases. Many strenuous attempts were made to procure a commutation of the sentence. Mr. Bright exerted himself with characteristic energy and humanity. Mr. Swinburne, the poet, made an appeal to the people of England in lines of great power and beauty on behalf of a policy of mercy to the prisoners. Lord Derby, who had then come to be at the head of the Government, refused to listen to any appeal. He declared that it was not a political offence, but simply a murder, commonplace in everything save its peculiar atrocity. He was even ungenerous enough to declare that

the act for which he had determined that the men should die was a "dastardly" deed. This was not merely a superfluous piece of ungenerosity; it was simply a misapplication of words. A minister of the Crown might well denounce, in the strongest language that could be made appropriate to the occasion, so lawless an act as that for which Allen and his companions were condemned; but there was no excuse for calling it dastardly. The conduct of a handful of men, who stopped a police-van in a great city and at the risk of their own lives rescued some of their political heroes from custody, proclaiming at the same time their readiness to die for the deed, might be called lawless, might even be called criminal; but, if words have any meaning at all, it could not be called dastardly. We can easily test the question, if we do not maintain the creed that the moral laws change according as they are applied by different persons. Let us suppose that, instead of the rescue of two Fenians in Manchester, Lord Derby had been talking of the rescue of two Garibaldians in Rome. Let us suppose that the Papal police were carrying off two of the followers of Garibaldi to a Roman prison, and that a few Garibaldians stopped the van in open day, and within reach of the whole force of the Papal gendarmes, broke the van open and rescued the prisoners, and that in the affray one of the Papal police was killed. Does anybody suppose that Lord Derby would have stigmatised the conduct of the rescuing Garibaldians as dastardly? Is it not more likely that, even if he yielded so far to official proprieties as to call it misguided, he would have qualified his disapprobation by declaring that it was also heroic?

One other of the five prisoners who were convicted together escaped the death-sentence. This was Condon, or Shore, an American by citizenship if not by birth. He had

undoubtedly been concerned in the attempt at rescue; but for some reason a distinction was made between him and the others. This act of mercy, in itself highly commendable, added to the bad effect produced in Ireland by the execution of the other three men; for it gave rise to the belief that Shore had been spared only because the protection of the American Government might have been invoked on his behalf. The other three, Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien, were executed. They all met death with courage and composure. It would be superfluous to say that their deaths did not discourage the spirit of Fenianism. On the contrary, they gave it a new lease of life.

Indeed, the execution of these men did not even tend to prevent crime. The excitement caused by the attempt they had made and the penalty they paid had hardly died away when a crime of a peculiarly atrocious nature was committed in the name of Fenianism. On November 23, 1867, Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien were hanged at Manchester. On December 13 an attempt was made to blow up the House of Detention at Clerkenwell. About four o'clock that day all London was startled by a shock and a sound resembling the distant throb of an earthquake or the blowing up of a powder-magazine. The explanation soon came. Two Fenian prisoners were in the Clerkenwell House of Detention, and some sympathisers outside had attempted to rescue them by placing a barrel of gunpowder close to the wall of the prison, and exploding the powder by means of a match and a fuse. About sixty yards of the prison wall were blown in, and numbers of small houses in the neighbourhood were shattered to pieces. Six persons were killed on the spot; about six more died from the effects of the injuries they received; some hundred and twenty persons were wounded. Forty premature confinements were the consequence of the

shock received by women, and twenty of the babes died in their birth. The clumsiness of the crime was only surpassed by its atrocity. Had the prisoners on whose behalf the attempt was made been near the wall at the time, they must have shared the fate of those who were victimised outside. Had they even been taking exercise in the yard, they would, in all probability, have been killed. They would have been taking exercise at the time had it not been for a warning the authorities at Scotland Yard received two days before, to the effect that an attempt at rescue was to be made by means of gunpowder and the blowing in of the wall. In consequence of this warning the governor of the prison had the prisoners confined to their cells that day; and thus, in all probability, they owed their lives to the disclosure of the secret plan which their officious and ill-omened admirers had in preparation for their rescue. Why the prison authorities and the police, thus forewarned, did not keep a sufficient watch upon the line of prison wall to prevent the possibility of any such scheme being put into execution, it passes the wit of man to comprehend. At the very time that this horrible crime and blunder was perpetrated, one of the London theatres was nightly crowded by spectators eager to see an Irish melodrama, among the incidents of which was the discussion of a plan for the rescue of a prisoner from a castle cell. The audience were immensely amused by the proposal of one confederate to blow up the castle altogether, and the manner in which it occurred to the simple plotters, just in time, that if they carried out this plan they must send the prisoner himself flying into air. The Clerkenwell conspirators had either not seen the popular drama or had missed the point of its broadest joke.

Five men and a woman were put on trial for the crime.

The Chief Justice, before whom the charge was tried, directed the withdrawal of the proceedings against the woman and one of the men, as there seemed to be no case against them. Three others were acquitted after a long trial; one man was convicted. Unfortunately for the moral effect of the conviction, the man was found guilty on the evidence of an informer; and a very strong attempt had been made to prove that the prisoner was not in London at all at the time when he was charged with the commission of the crime. A sort of official but extrajudicial enquiry took place as to the validity of the plea of *alibi*, and the result was that the Chief Justice and the authorities at the Home Office declared themselves satisfied with the verdict. Mr. Bright raised the question in the House of Commons, and urged a further delay of the execution; but he was answered with the assurance that no doubt was any longer felt as to the propriety of the verdict. The man was executed. So far as it is possible to judge, the persons who were concerned in the plot to blow in the prison wall appear to have been of that irresponsible crew who hang on to the skirts of all secret political associations, and whose adhesion is only one other reason for regarding such associations as deplorable and baneful. Such men are of the class who bring a curse, who bring many curses, on even the best cause that strives to work in secret. They prowl after the heels of organised conspiracy, and what it will not do they are ready in some fatal moment to attempt. It would be the merest injustice to deny that among the recognised leaders of the Fenian movement were men of honourable feeling and sincere although misguided patriotism. It would be as cruel and as unjust to suppose that these men could have had any sympathy with such an outrage as that which destroyed the innocent women and children at Clerkenwell. But the

political conspirator may well pause, before entering on his schemes, to reflect that an authority exercised in secret can never be sure of making itself thoroughly felt, and of preventing some desperate follower from undertaking on his own account a deed which his leaders would never have sanctioned. If no other reason existed, this thought alone might be enough to set men's hearts against secret political confederation.

It is not necessary to follow out the steps of the Fenian movement any further. There were many isolated attempts; there were many arrests, trials, imprisonments, banishments. The effect of all this, it must be stated as a mere historical fact, was only to increase the intensity of dissatisfaction and discontent among the Irish peasantry. It is curious to notice how entirely Irish in its character the movement was, and how little sympathy it gave to or got from the movements of Continental revolution. In one or two instances some restless soldier of universal democracy found his way from the Continent to place his services at the disposal of the Fenians. The alliance was never successful. The stranger did not like the Irish; the Irish did not take to the stranger. Their ways were different. The Irish people, and more especially the Irish peasantry, failed altogether to be captivated by the prospect of the "democratic and social republic." They did not even understand what was meant by the vague grandeur of the phraseology which describes the supposed common cause as "the Revolution." Eloquence about the solidarity of peoples was lost on them. The most extreme of them only dreamed of the independence of Ireland; they had no ambition to bear a part in a general pulling down of old institutions.

The phenomena of the Fenian movement did not fail to impress some statesmanlike *minds* in England. There were

some public men who saw that the time had come when mere repression must no longer be relied upon as a cure for Irish discontent. We know since that time that even the worst excesses of the movement impressed the mind of Mr. Gladstone with a conviction that the hour was appropriate for doing something to remove the causes of the discontent that made Ireland restless. The impatient and silly nurse tries to stop the child's crying by beating it; a more careful and intelligent person makes a prompt investigation, and finds that a pin is sticking into the little sufferer. The English Government had for a long time been the stupid nurse to the crying child. They had tried threatening words and quick blows. The cry of complaint still was heard. It occurred at last to some men of responsible authority to seek out the cause and quietly try to remove it. While many public instructors lost themselves in vain shriekings over the wickedness of Fenianism and the incurable perversity of the Irish people, one statesman was already convinced that the very shock of the Fenian agitation would arouse public attention to the recognition of substantial grievance, and to the admission that the business of statesmanship was to seek out the remedy and provide redress.

CHAPTER LIV.

TRADES-UNIONS.

ENGLISH society was much distressed and disturbed about the same time by the stories of outrages more cruel, and of a conspiracy more odious and alarming in its purpose, than any that could be ascribed to the Fenian movement. It began to be common talk that among the trades-associations there was systematic terrorising of the worst kind, and that a *Vehmgericht* more secret and more grim than any known to the middle ages was issuing its sentences in many of our great industrial communities. Ordinary intimidation had long been regarded as one of the means by which some of the trades-unions kept their principles in force. Now, however, it was common report that secret assassination was in many cases the doom of those who brought on themselves the wrath of the Trades-unions. For many years the great town of Sheffield had had a special notoriety in consequence of the outrages of the kind that were believed to be committed there. When a workman had made himself obnoxious to the leaders of some local trades-union, it occasionally happened that some sudden and signal misfortune befell him. Perhaps his house was set on fire; perhaps a canister of gunpowder was exploded under his windows, or some rudely constructed infernal-machine was flung into his bedroom at midnight. The man himself, supposing him to have escaped with his life, felt convinced that in the attempt to destroy him he saw the hand of the

union; his neighbours were of his opinion; but it sometimes happened, nevertheless, that there was no possibility of bringing home the charge upon evidence that could satisfy a criminal court. The comparative impunity which such crimes were enabled to secure made the perpetrators of them feel more and more safe in their enterprises; and the result was that outrages began to increase in atrocity, boldness, and numbers. The employers offered large rewards for the discovery of the offenders; the Government did the same; but not much came of the offers. The employers charged the local trades-unions with being the authors of all the crimes; the officials of the unions distinctly and indignantly denied the charge. In some instances they did more. They offered on their own account a reward for the detection of the criminals, in order that their own innocence might thereby be established once for all in the face of day. At a public meeting held in Sheffield to express public opinion on the subject, the secretary of one of the local unions, a man named Broadhead, spoke out with indignant and vehement eloquence in denunciation of the crimes and in protest against the insinuation that they were sanctioned by the authority or done with the connivance of the trades-organisation. Most persons who read the report of the meeting were much impressed with the earnestness of Broadhead; and even among those who had no sympathy with the principles of unionism, there were not a few who were of opinion that Broadhead and his colleagues had been gravely wronged by the accusations made against them. On the other hand, it would seem that impartial persons who heard the speech made by Broadhead listened with a growing conviction that it was a little too virtuously indignant, and that it repudiated the idea of any appeal to force in maintaining the authority of the union somewhat

more comprehensively than any recognition of known facts would warrant. At all events an appeal was made to the Government with apparently equal earnestness by the employers and by the union; and the Government resolved to undertake a full investigation into the whole condition of the Trades-unions. A Commission was appointed, and a bill passed through Parliament enabling it to take evidence upon oath. The Commissioners sent down to Sheffield three examiners, the chief of whom was Mr. Overend, a Queen's Counsel of distinction, to make enquiry as to the outrages. The examiners had authority to offer protection to anyone, even though himself engaged in the commission of the outrages, who should give information which might lead to the discovery of the conspiracy. This offer had its full effect. The Government were now so evidently determined to get at the root of all the evil, that many of those actively engaged in the commission of the crimes took fright and believed they had best consult for their personal safety. Accordingly the Commission got as much evidence as could be desired, and it was soon put beyond dispute that more than one association had systematically employed the most atrocious means to punish offenders against their self-made laws and to deter men from venturing to act in opposition to them. The saw-grinders' union in Sheffield had been particularly active in such work, and the man named William Broadhead, who had so indignantly protested the innocence of his union, was the secretary of that organisation. Broadhead was proved to have ordered, arranged, and paid for the murder of at least one offender against his authority, and to have set on foot in the same way various deeds scarcely if at all less criminal. The crimes were paid for out of the funds of the union. There were gradations of outrage, ascending from what might be called mere per-

sonal annoyance up to the serious destruction of property, then to personal injury, to mutilation, and to death. "Rattening" was one of the milder forms of tyranny. The tools of obnoxious workers were destroyed; machinery was spoiled. Then the houses of the obnoxious were blown up, or cans of explosive material were flung into them at night. In one instance a woman was blinded; in another a woman was killed. Men were shot at with the object of so wounding them as to prevent them from carrying on their work; one man was shot at and killed. A ghastly account was given by one sufferer of the manner in which his house was set on fire at midnight by an explosive material flung in, and how the room and the bedcurtains flamed and blazed about him and his wife, and how he saved his wife with the utmost difficulty and at extreme risk to his own life, by tearing from her scorching body the nightdress already burning, and dropping her thus naked into the street. Broadhead himself came before the examiners and acknowledged the part he had taken in the direction of such crimes. He explained how he had devised them, organised them, selected the agents by whom they were to be committed, and paid for them out of the funds of the union. The men whom he selected had sometimes no personal resentment against the victims they were bidden to mutilate or destroy. They were ordered and paid to punish men whom Broadhead considered to be offenders against the authority and the interests of the union, and they did the work obediently. In Manchester a state of things was found to exist only less hideous than that which prevailed in Sheffield. It was among the brickmakers of Manchester that the chief offences were committed. The clay which offending brickmakers were to use was sometimes stuffed with thousands of needles, in order to pierce and maim the hands of those who

unsuspectingly went to work with it. The sheds of a master who dismissed union-men were burnt with naphtha. An obnoxious man's horse was roasted to death. Many persons were shot at and wounded. Murder was done in Manchester too. Other towns were found to be not very far distant from Sheffield and Manchester in the audacity and ingenuity of their trade outrages. During the alarms caused by such revelations, many people began to cry out that the whole structure of our society was undermined, and that the "organisation of labour" was simply a vast conspiracy to make capital, science, and energy the mere bondslaves of the Trades-union and of the tyrants and serfs, knaves and dupes, who kept it up.

Society, however, does not long continue in a mood for the indulgence of mere alarm and inarticulate shrieking. Society soon began to reflect that if it had heard terrible things, it had probably heard all the worst. The great majority of the trades-unions appeared after the most searching investigation to be absolutely free from any complicity in the crimes, or any sanction of them. Men of sense began to ask whether society had not itself to blame in some measure even for the crimes of the Trades-unions. The law had always dealt unfairly and harshly with the trade-associations. Public opinion had for a long time regarded them as absolutely lawless. There was a time when their very existence would have been an infraction of the law. For centuries our legislation had acted on the principle that the working-man was a serf of society, bound to work for the sake of the employer and on the employer's terms. The famous statute of labourers, passed in the reign of Edward III., declared that every person under the age of sixty not having means to live should on being required be "bound to serve him that doth require him," or else be

committed to gaol "until he find surety to serve." If a workman or a servant left his service before the time agreed upon, he was to be imprisoned. The same statute contained a section fixing the scale of wages, and declaring that no higher wages should be paid. An Act passed in the reign of Elizabeth contained provisions making the acceptance of wages compulsory, and fixing the hours and the wages of labour. A master wrongfully dismissing the servant was made liable to a fine, but a servant leaving his employment was to be imprisoned. The same principle continued to be embodied in our legislation with regard to masters and workmen, with hardly any modification, down to 1813, and indeed, to a great extent, down to 1824. Even after that time, and down to the period of which we are now writing, there was still a marked and severe distinction drawn between master and servant, master and workman, in our legislation. In cases of breach of contract the remedy against the employer was entirely civil; against the employed, criminal. A workman might even be arrested on a warrant for alleged breach of contract and taken to prison before the case had been tried. The laws were particularly stringent in their declarations against all manner of combination among workmen. Any combined effort to raise wages would have been treated as conspiracy of a specially odious and dangerous order. Down to 1825 a mere combination of workmen for their own protection was unlawful; but long after 1825 the law continued to deal very harshly with what was called conspiracy among working-men for trade purposes. The very laws which did this were a survival of the legislation which for centuries had compelled a man to work for whomsoever chose to call on him, and either fixed his maximum of wages for him or left it to be fixed by the justices. Not many years ago it was held that

although a strike could not itself be pronounced illegal, yet a combination of workmen to bring about a strike was a conspiracy, and was to be properly punished by law. In 1867, the very year when the Commission we have described held its enquiries at Sheffield and Manchester, a decision given by the Court of Queen's Bench affirmed that a friendly society, which was also a trades-union, had no right to the protection of the law in enforcing a claim for a debt. It was laid down that because the rules of the society appeared to be such as would operate in restraint of trade, therefore the society was not entitled to the protection of the civil law in any ordinary matter of account. The general objects of the Trades-union, as distinguished from those of the friendly society, were regarded as absolutely outside the pale of legal protection. It was not merely that the Trades-unions sometimes made illegal arrangements, which of course could not be recognised or enforced in any civil court. The principle was that because they, or some of them, did this sometimes, they and the whole of them, and all their transactions, were to be regarded as shut out from the protection of the civil law.

So rigidly was this principle applied to the Trades-unions that they were apparently not allowed to defend themselves against plunder by a dishonest member. This extraordinary principle was in force for several years after the time at which we have now arrived in this history. For example, in 1869 an information was laid in Bradford against the secretary of a trades-association for having wilfully misappropriated a sum of money belonging to the society. The guilt of the man was clear, but the magistrates dismissed the charge, on the ground that the society was itself established for illegal purposes, that is, for the restraint of trade, and that therefore it was not entitled to the protec-

tion of the law. An appeal was made to the Court of Queen's Bench, and the decision was that the appeal must be dismissed, and that the society was established for illegal purposes. The judges were divided equally in opinion, and therefore, in accordance with the usage, the judgment was allowed to go in favour of the decision of the inferior court. The absurdity of such a principle of law is evident. It is proper that an illegal association should not be maintained in illegal acts; but it is hardly a principle of our law that because an association has been established for purposes which seem in opposition to some legal principle, its members may be plundered by anyone with impunity. A man who keeps a gambling-house is the proprietor of an unlawful establishment; but if a robber snatches his purse he is free to claim the protection of the police, and it is not open to the thief to rest his defence simply on the plea that the man's occupation is illegal, and that his money, if left to him, would unquestionably have been applied to unlawful purposes. That illustration is, however, inadequate to express properly the injustice done to the Trades-unions. It assumes that the objects of the unions were fairly to be considered unlawful, and to be classed with the business of gaming-houses and shops for the reception of stolen goods. But in truth the main object of the Trades-unions was as strictly in accordance with public policy as that of the Inns of Court or the College of Surgeons. One result of the investigations into the outrages in Sheffield and in Manchester was that public attention was drawn directly to the whole subject; the searching light of full free discussion was turned on to it, and after a while everyone began to see that the wanton injustice of the law and of society in dealing with the associations of working-men was responsible for many of the errors and

even of the crimes into which some of the worst of these associations had allowed themselves to be seduced. It is as certain as any problem in mathematics can be, that when the civil law excludes any class of persons from its full protection, that class will be easily drawn into lawlessness. "The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law," is a reminder that barbs the advice which bids the unfriended to be not poor but break the law which denies them its protection.

It was not, however, the law alone which had set itself for centuries against the working-man. Public opinion and legislation were in complete agreement as to the rights of Trades-unions. For many years the whole body of English public opinion outside the working-class itself was entirely against the principle of the unions. It is, perhaps, not possible to recall to mind any question open to controversy in which public opinion was ever in our time so nearly unanimous as it was on the subject of trades-organisations. It was an axiom among all the employing and capitalist classes that trades-organisations were as much to be condemned in point of morality as they were absurd in the sight of political economy. Country squires, who had only just been converted from the public profession of protectionist principles, and who still in their secret intelligences failed to see that they were wrong; the whole tone of whose thinking was still, when left to itself, entirely protectionist, and who, the moment they ceased to keep a strict guard on their tongues, would talk protection as naturally as they talked English—such men were lost in wonder or consumed by anger at the workingman's infatuated notions on the subject of political economy. All the leading newspapers were constantly writing against the Trades-unions at one time; not writing merely as a Liberal paper writes against

some Tory measure, but as men condemn a monstrous heresy. A comfortable social theory began to spring up, that all the respectable and well-conducted workmen were opposed to the unions, and all the ne'er-do-wells were on their side and in their ranks. The paid officers of the unions were described as mere cunning parasites, living on the sap and strength of the organisation. The spokesmen of the unions were set down invariably as selfish and audacious demagogues, who incited their ignorant victims on to ruin in order that they themselves might live in comfort and revel in popular applause.

There can be no doubt that some insincere and unprincipled persons did occasionally attach themselves to the trades-organisations. Such men professed to adopt a principle in order to get money and applause. They did exactly as men do in a higher social class who profess to adopt a principle in order to get into Parliament, and then into office. But on the whole the leaders of the trades-organisations appear to have been men of sincere purpose and of good character. The officers of many of the societies worked for very small pay; for no more, in fact, than they could have got by their ordinary labour. It is also, we believe, a fact that, taken on the whole, the men in the organisations represented a much better class of workmen than those who held aloof from them. The numbers of men registered on the books of the trades-unions did not by any means represent the actual number who sympathised with unionism. Much of the business of a trades-union was simply that of an ordinary benefit society. Strikes were not always going on; the funds of the union were not often being voted to assist some mutinous brothers. By far the greater part of the occupation of a trades-union was like that of the Oddfellows or some other benefit association. A

great many working-men, a considerable proportion indeed of the working population, were members of some friendly society, and had been so perhaps from their first starting into life. Such men did not always care to give up the society to which they had been long attached, for the purpose of joining a trades-union which was usually only performing just the same functions. Therefore one mistake very commonly made by those who entered into the controversy was to count the mere numbers on the books of the trades-unions, and assume that these represented the whole strength of the movement. The numbers would have been great, and ought to have been significant, in any case; but great as they were they by no means fairly illustrated the strength of the hold which the principle of the trades-organisation had got upon the working-classes.

That sort of public opinion of which we have already spoken, well satisfied in its mind as to most things, was for many years particularly well satisfied about strikes. We can find its views expressed in every tone. Solemn disquisition and light comedy alike gave them form. Parliament, the pulpit, the press, the stage, philosophy, fiction, all were for a long time in combination to give forth one pronouncement on the subject. A strike was something always wicked and foolish; abstractly wicked; foolish to the fundamental depths of its theory. "All I have to say," a benevolent nobleman called out to a meeting of working-men, "is—never strike!" That was his sincere advice: whatever happens, never strike; if you strike you must be doing wrong. To engage in a strike was, according to his view, like engaging in a conspiracy to murder. Such was long the opinion of almost all above the social level of the workman himself. A strike was in their view an offence against all social laws, to be reprobated by every good man.

It was not looked upon as a rough last resource to get at a decision in a controversy not otherwise to be settled, but simply as a crime. It was assumed as an axiom in political economy that a strike must be a wrong thing, because it wasted time and money, and could not in any way increase the wages fund of the country. "The wages fund" was flung at the head of the erring artisan as a phrase to settle the whole question for him, and show him what a foolish man he was not to take any terms offered him. Undoubtedly a strike is under any circumstances the cause of the throwing away of time and money. But so too is a lawsuit. There can be no civil cause in which it would not have saved time and money if the parties could have come to a reasonable agreement among themselves, and avoided any appeal to the court. Prudent men do very often put up with a considerable loss rather than waste their time, spend their money, and sour their temper in a court of law. But it would be in vain to tell the meekest or the dullest man that he has no right to appeal to a civil court to enforce any claim. This was, however, practically the sermon which English public opinion kept preaching to the working-man for generations. He had often no way of asserting his claims effectively except by the instrumentality of a strike. A court of law could do nothing for him. If he thought his wages ought to be raised, or ought not to be lowered, a court of law could not assist him. Once it would have compelled him to take what was offered, and work for it or go to prison. Now, in better times, it would offer him no protection against the most arbitrary conduct on the part of an employer. He was admonished that he must not attempt by any combination to "fix the price of labour." Yet he knew very well that in many trades the masters did by association among themselves fix the price of labour.

He knew that there were associations of employers which held meetings at regular periods for the purpose of agreeing among themselves as to the wages they would pay to their workmen. He failed to see why he and his fellows should not come to a common resolution as to the wages they would accept. The argument drawn from the "wages fund" did not affect him greatly. He reasoned the matter out in a rough and ready way of his own. He saw that the employer was making a great deal of money in the year, and that he and his fellows had very small wages. It seemed to him that the master ought to be content with a smaller amount of profit, and give his workmen a larger weekly rate of pay. That may not have been very sound political economy; but even as a thesis of political economy it was not to be got rid of by the familiar way of putting the argument about the wages fund. As regarded the right of combination, he saw that other men in other occupations did combine and did have rules of their own, and in fact trades-unions of their own. What, he asked, is the Bar but a trades-union? Is not a man prohibited from competing with his fellows by taking a rate of pay lower than the minimum fixed by the association? Is he not refused permission to practise at all if he will not conform to the rules of the lawyers' union? What is the medical profession but a trades-union? What the Stock Exchange?

In spite of law, in spite of public opinion, the trades-unions went on and prospered. Some of them grew to be great organisations, disposing of vast funds. Several fought out against employers long battles that were almost like a social civil war. Sometimes they were defeated; sometimes they were victorious; sometimes they got at least so far that each side could claim the victory, and wrangle once more historically over the point. Many individual societies were

badly managed and went to pieces. Some were made the victims of swindlers, just like other institutions among other classes. Some were brought into difficulties simply because of the childlike ignorance of the most elementary principles of political economy with which they were conducted. Still the Trades-union, taken as a whole, became stronger and stronger every day. It became part of the social life of the working-classes. At last it began to find public opinion giving way before it. Some eminent men, of whom Mr. Mill was the greatest, had long been endeavouring to get the world to recognise the fact that a strike is not a thing which can be called good or bad until we know its object and its history; that the men who strike may be sometimes right, and that they have sometimes been successful. But as usual in this country, and as another evidence doubtless of what is commonly called the practical character of Englishmen, the right of the trades-unions to existence and to social recognition was chiefly impressed upon the public mind by the strength of the organisation itself. The processions of the trades-unions during the Reform agitation had startled many alarmists and set many indolent minds thinking. This vast organisation had apparently sprung out of the ground. Every influence, legal, social, and political, had been against it. The press had condemned it; the pulpit had denounced it; Parliament had passed no end of laws against it; good men mourned over it; wise men shook their heads at it; and yet there it was, stronger than ever. Many men came at once to the frankly admitted conclusion that there must be some principles, economic as well as others, to justify the existence and the growth of so remarkable an institution. The Sheffield outrages, even while they horrified everyone, yet made most persons begin to feel that the time had come when there must not be left in the mouth of the worst and

most worthless member of a trades-union any excuse for saying any longer that the law was unjust to him and to his class. A course of legislation was then begun which was not made complete for several years after. We may, however, anticipate here the measures which passed in 1875, and show how at length the fair claims of the unions were recognised. The masters and workmen were placed on absolute equality as regarded the matter of contract. They had been thus equal for many years in other countries; in France, Germany, and Italy, for example. A breach of contract resulting in damages was to be treated on either side as giving rise to a civil and not a criminal remedy. There was to be no imprisonment, except as it is ordered in other cases, by a county court judge; that is, a man may be committed to prison who has been ordered to pay a certain sum, and out of contumacy will not pay it, although payment is shown to be within his power. No combination of persons is to be deemed criminal if the act proposed to be done would not be criminal when done by one person. Several breaches of contract were, however, very properly made the subject of special legislation. If, for example, a man "wilfully and maliciously" broke his contract of service to a gas or water company, knowing that by doing so he might cause great public injury, he might be imprisoned. This is perfectly reasonable. A man employed to watch a line of railway who wilfully broke his contract of service and ran away at a time when his sudden absence might cause the destruction of a coming train, would hardly be punished adequately by a civil process and an order to pay a fine. On the other hand, it should be said that the person hiring could be imprisoned for breach of contract as well as the person hired, if his breach of contract involved serious injury, or even serious danger, to life or property. Imprison-

ment too might be inflicted on any person who used either violence or intimidation to compel others to act with him. It was made strictly unlawful and punishable by imprisonment to hide or injure the tools of workmen in order to prevent them from doing their work; or to "beset" workmen in order to prevent them from getting to their place of business, or to intimidate them into keeping away from it. In principle this legislation accomplished all that any reasonable advocate of the claims of the trades-unions could have demanded. It put the masters and the workmen on an equality. It recognised the right of combination for every purpose which is not itself actually contrary to law. It settled the fact that the right of a combination is just the same as the right of an individual. The law had long conceded to any one man the right to say for himself that he would not work for less than a certain rate of wages. It now acknowledged that a hundred or ten thousand working-men have a right to combine in the same resolution. It admitted their legal right to put this resolve into execution by way of a strike if they so think fit. The law has nothing to do with the wisdom or the folly of the act. It may be very unwise; it may be ridiculous; that is a matter for the decision of the persons concerned in it. A man may be a great fool who goes to law for some unreasonable claim, or to resist some well-sustained demand; but the law-courts are open to him all the same—if he throws away his money, that is his affair. Then, to carry the exposition a little further, an association of working-men have a perfect legal right to endeavour to persuade other working-men to adopt their views, accept their resolutions, and become members of their union. They have a right to say that anyone who does not agree to their rules shall not become or shall not remain a member of their society. Further, and finally, they have a right to

say that they will not work in the same establishment with men who have acted in such a way as in their opinion to do injury to the common cause of the trade. This may seem to assert a very injurious principle; yet its justice is hardly to be disputed. Its justice never would have been disputed if the upper classes in this country, and all who follow their lead, had not got into the habit of regarding trade questions from the employers' point of view. No one would have questioned the right of an employer to dismiss a number of workmen because they belonged to a society of communists. Many persons would think him very harsh and unreasonable; but many also would hold that he was doing perfectly right; and no one would say that he was acting in excess of his strict rights as an employer. His argument would be: "Communism is a principle directly opposed to the interests of property; I as a man of property cannot have men in my employ who are engaged in a purpose which I believe destructive to the interests of my class." This is exactly what the trades-unions said of men who went in opposition to the union. They said: "These men are acting in a manner highly injurious to the interests of our class; we will not work with them." Their case is even better than that of the employer. The employer says: "I have a right to turn these men out of my place; they shall not work for me." The union men only said: "We will not work with men who set themselves in opposition to the interests of the union." Everyone knows that there are eccentric employers here and there who make rules of various odd kinds with regard to the conditions on which they will accept the services of persons willing to work. One will not employ a Catholic; another will not employ a Unitarian; a third proscribes any young man who smokes. We have heard of a great establishment the proprietor of which would not employ, or continue to employ,

any man who wore a moustache. The members of the trades-unions were of course fully aware of the existence of such arbitrary conditions imposed by employers. It naturally seemed intolerable to them to find that they were preached at in most of the newspapers, and condemned from all platforms except their own, because they asserted an independence of action for themselves in matters of far greater importance to the interests of their union and their class.

So far as this we believe their rights are now fully admitted. Beyond this no sensible man among the trades-unions themselves would think of asking that they should go. The unions have no right to coerce or intimidate anyone into agreement with them. To refuse to associate with a man is a very different thing from claiming a right to molest or frighten him. The more fully the rights of the trades-unions are acknowledged, the more energetic and fearless the law may be in preventing them from going beyond those rights. We say fearless, because law, or those who administer it, can always and only be fearless when the authority exerted is based on fairness and sound principle. The men who worked most earnestly to organise and maintain the trades-unions never could have had any wish that the organisation should act in violation of the principles of justice, civilisation, and public policy. Perhaps if the just claims and the substantial rights of the unions had been recognised long before, the world might never have been shocked by the hideous revelations of crime and outrage in Sheffield and in Manchester. No influence is more demoralising to the character of men than to feel that the laws of a country deal unjustly with them; that the laws are made by and for a class whose sympathies are not with them; and that from the protection of those laws they are blindly or purposely excluded.

The civil laws which dealt so harshly for a long time with Trades-unionism dealt unfairly too with the friendly societies, with that strong and sudden growth of our modern days—Co-operation. We call it the growth of our modern days because, although there has been a principle of co-operation in some form or other working in a more or less experimental and darkened way all through the history of civilisation, yet the shape it has assumed of recent days is strictly a growth of modern conditions. If working-men can combine effectively and in large numbers for a benefit society or for a strike, why should they not also co-operate for the purpose of supplying each other with good and cheap food and clothing, and dividing among themselves the profits which would otherwise be distributed among various manufacturers and shop-keepers? This is a question which had often been put before, without any very decided practical result coming of it; but in 1844, or thereabouts, it was put and tested in a highly practical manner by some working-men in the north of England. North and south of England seem to be marked out by the same differences as those which distinguish north and south in most other places: the north has more of the vigorous and practical intelligence, the south more of the poetic and artistic feeling. From the sturdy north of England have always come the great political and industrial movements which specially contributed to make England what we now know her to be. In the north the co-operative movement first sprang into existence. The association called "The Equitable Pioneers' Co-operative Store" was founded in Rochdale by a few poor flannel-weavers. The times were bad; there had been a failure of a savings-bank, involving heavy loss to many classes; and these men cast about in their minds for some way of making their little earnings go far.

Most of them were, or rather had been, followers of Robert Owen, who, if he taught men to think wrongly on many subjects, taught them at least to think. These Rochdale weavers were thoughtful men, probably of the class who might have figured in the pages of "Alton Locke." One decidedly good teaching which they had from Robert Owen was a dislike to the credit system. They saw that the shopkeeper who gave his goods at long credit must necessarily have to charge a much higher price than the actual value of the goods, and even of a reasonable profit, in order to make up for his having to lie out of his money, and to secure himself against bad debts. They also saw that the credit system leads to almost incessant litigation; and besides that litigation means the waste of time and money, some of them, it appears, had a conscientious objection to the taking of an oath. It occurred to these Rochdale weavers, therefore, that if they could get together a little capital they might start a shop or store of their own, and thus be able to supply themselves with better goods, and at cheaper rates, than by dealing with the ordinary tradesmen. Twenty-eight of them began by subscribing twopence a week each. The number of subscribers was afterwards increased to forty, and the weekly subscription to threepence. When they had got 28*l.* they thought they had capital enough to begin their enterprise with. They took a small shop in a little back street, called Toad Lane. The name might seem a repulsive one, and perhaps ill-omened, unless indeed its omen were to be held encouraging, on the theory of the toad bearing the precious jewel in his head. But it has to be said that "Toad Lane" was only the Lancashire corruption of "The Old Lane"; "The Old" soon changing itself into "T' Owd," in a manner familiar to all who know Lancashire, and "T' Owd" becoming "Toad" by easy and rapid trans-

mutation. After the shop had been fitted up, the equitable pioneers had only 14*l.* left to stock it; and the concern looked so small and shabby that the hearts of some of the pioneers might have well-nigh sunk within them. A neighbouring shopkeeper, feeling utter contempt for the whole enterprise, declared that he could remove the whole stock-in-trade in a wheelbarrow. The wheelbarrow-load of goods soon, however, became too heavy to be carried away in the hold of a great steamer. The pioneers began by supplying each other with groceries; they went on to butchers' meat, and then to all sorts of clothing. From supplying goods they progressed on to the manufacturing of goods; they had a corn mill and a cotton mill, and they became to a certain extent a land and building society. They set aside parts of their profits for a library and reading-room, and they founded a co-operative Turkish bath. Their capital of 28*l.* swelled in sixteen years to over 120,000*l.* Cash payments and the division of profits were the main sources of this remarkable prosperity. Much of their success in the beginning was due to the fact that they supplied good articles, and that those who bought could always rely on carrying home real value for their money. But the magic of the principle of division of profits worked wonders for them. Not merely did the shareholders share in the profits, but all the buyers received an equitable percentage on the price of every article they bought. Each purchaser, on paying for what he had bought, received a ticket which entitled him to that percentage at each division of profit, and thus many a poor man found at the quarterly division that he had several shillings, perhaps a pound, coming to him, which seemed at first to have dropped out of the clouds, so little direct claim did he appear to have on it. He had not paid more for his goods than he would have had to pay at the cheapest shop;

he had got them of the best quality the price could buy; and at the end of each period he found that he had a sum of money standing to his credit, which he could either take away or leave to accumulate at the store. Many other institutions were soon following the example of the Rochdale pioneers. Long before their capital had swelled to the amount we have mentioned, the North of England was studded with co-operative associations of one kind or another. One of the very earliest founded was the Leeds Corn Mill. There were working men's associations as well as co-operative stores. In the working associations the workers are the capitalists. They receive the regular rate of wages, and they also receive a dividend on their profits. We need not enter into further detail as to the progress of these institutions. Many of them proved sad failures. Some started on chimerical principles; some were stupidly, some selfishly mismanaged. There came seasons of heavy strain on labour and trade, when the resources of many were taxed to their uttermost, and when some even of the best seemed for a moment likely to go under. The co-operative associations suffered in fact the trials and vicissitudes that must be met by all institutions of men. But the one result is clear and palpable; they have as a whole been a most remarkable success. Of late years the principle has been taken up by classes who would have appeared at one time to have little in common with the poor flannel-weavers of Rochdale. The civil servants of the Crown first adopted the idea; and now in some of the most fashionable quarters of London the carriages of some of their most fashionable residents are seen at the crowded doors of the co-operative store. However the co-operative principle may develop, it may safely be predicted that posterity will not let it die. It has taken firm hold of our

modern society. No one now any longer dreams, as some of its more enthusiastic founders once did, that it is destined to prove a regenerator of mankind; that it is to extinguish competition, and the selfishness which keeps competition up. It is in its present stage nothing but competition in a new form. The co-operative store competes with the ordinary tradesman, who winces very keenly at the competition, and calls for even the intervention of Parliament to save him from at least one class of the competitors. But even very sanguine reformers do not often now ask that their one idea shall supersede every other; and most of the promoters of the co-operative system are well satisfied that it takes so conspicuous a place among established institutions. It seems certainly destined to develop rather than fade; to absorb rather than be absorbed. The law was much against the principle in the beginning. Before 1852 all co-operative associations had to come under the Friendly Societies Act, which prohibited their dealing with any but their own members. An Act obtained in 1852 allowed them to sell to persons not members of their body. For many years they were not permitted to hold more than an acre of land. More lately this absurd restriction was abolished, and they were allowed to trade in land, to hold land to any extent, and to act as building societies. The friendly societies, which were in their origin merely working men's clubs, have been the subject of legislation since the later years of the last century. It may be doubted whether, even up to this day, that legislation has not done them more harm than good. The law neither takes them fairly under its protection and control, nor leaves them to do the best they can for themselves uncontrolled and on their own responsibility. At one time the sort of left-handed recognition which the law gave them had a direct tendency to

do harm. An officer was appointed by the Government, who might inspect the manner in which the accounts of the societies were kept, and certify that they were in conformity with the law; but he had no authority to look actually into the affairs of a society. His business was in fact nothing more than to certify that the legal conditions had been fully complied with, thus implying that on the face of things the accounts seemed all right. The mere fact, however, that there was any manner of Government certificate proved sadly misleading to thousands of persons. Some actually regarded the certificate as a guarantee given by the Government that their money was safe; a guarantee which bound the State to make good any loss to the depositors. Others, who were not quite so credulous, were convinced at least that the certificate testified on Government authority that the funds of the society were safe, and that its accounts and its business were managed on principles of strict economical soundness. The Government official certified nothing of the kind. A man at the head of a large establishment brings to some accountant the books of his household expenses. The accountant examines them and says, "All these figures add up quite correctly; the accounts seem to be kept on the proper principle. If all these goods were got which I see put down here, and if all these payments were made, then your accounts are in safe condition." But the accountant does not know whether the cook and the butler and the grooms got all the articles put down in the books, or whether the articles were all required, or whether they were paid for as stated. For all the accountant knows or professes to know, the owner of the house may be swindled by every servant and every tradesman. His affairs may be managed for him on some such principle as that of the house in which Gil Blas was

once a servant, and where, from the steward down, the whole body of domestics and of trades-people were in a conspiracy to cheat the unhappy proprietor. The certificate given to the friendly societies was of no greater value than this. Many of the societies were sadly mismanaged; in certain of them there was the grossest malversation of funds; in some towns much distress was caused among the depositors in consequence. The societies had to pass, in fact, through a stage of confusion, ignorance, and experiment, and it is perhaps only to be wondered at that there was not greater mismanagement, greater blundering, and more lamentable failure. It is not by any means certain that during these earlier stages of the growth of such institutions, the interference and even the protection of Government would have done them much good. But the indirect control which the Government for a long time undertook, had apparently no other effect than to interpose restriction just where restriction was injurious, and to give a semblance of protection which was only calculated to create a false security in the minds of ignorant people and to lead to delusion and disappointment.

The Government cannot be charged of late years with any want of active interest in the business of life among the poor. Its protecting, directing hand is almost everywhere. Sometimes the help thus given is judicious and valuable. For example, the Post Office Savings Banks have become most popular institutions, and no one can doubt that they have tended to develop habits of prudence and economy among the poorer classes all over the country. One of the most curious phenomena of these later times is the reaction that has apparently taken place towards that system of paternal government which Macaulay detested, and which not long ago the Manchester School seemed in good hopes

of being able to supersede by the virtue of individual action, private enterprise, voluntary benevolence. We shall still have to describe some much more remarkable illustrations of this reaction than any that have yet been given. Keeping for the present to trades' organisations, we would direct attention to the fact that whereas in old days the Government said, "You shall do nothing to help yourselves without our control; and we will do nothing for you but to prosecute you as often as possible," the tendency now is to say, "You may do everything you like for yourselves, but you must allow us to enter into a benevolent rivalry with you and insist upon doing all we can for you in our way at the same time." Whatever the defects or the possible dangers of such a principle, if pushed too far, it is at least not likely to engender artizan conspiracy, to give excuse for secret association, to help men like Broadhead into the position of leaders and despots, to furnish weak minds with an excuse for following the instigations of the fire-raiser and the assassin. All that law has done lately to remove restriction from the "organisation of labour," if we may once more employ that pompous but expressive phrase, has been well done. We must not hasten to anticipate ill from the almost equally rapid movement of the tendency to help labour in doing labour's own proper work.

CHAPTER LV.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE NEW DOMINION.

ON February 19, 1867, Lord Carnarvon, Secretary for the Colonies, moved the second reading of the Bill for the Confederation of the North American Provinces of the British Empire. This was in fact a measure to carry out in practical form the great principles which Lord Durham had laid down in his celebrated report. Lord Durham had done more than merely affirm the principles on which the Constitution of the Canadas should be established. He had laid the foundations of the structure. Now the time had come to raise the building to its practical completion. The bill prepared by Lord Carnarvon proposed that the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, in other words Upper and Lower Canada, along with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, should be joined in one federation, to be called the Dominion of Canada, having a central or federal Parliament, and local or state Legislatures. The central Parliament was to consist of a Senate and a House of Commons. The Senate was to be made up of seventy members nominated by the Governor-General for life, on a summons from under the Great Seal of Canada. The House of Commons was to be filled by members elected by the people of the provinces according to population, at the rate of one member for every 17,000 persons, and the duration of a Parliament was not to be more than five years. The executive was vested in the Crown, represented of course by the Governor-

General. The principle on which the central Parliament was constructed appears to have been arrived at by adopting some of the ideas of England and some of those of the United States. The Senate, for example, was made to resemble as nearly as possible the system of the English House of Lords; but the representative plan applied to the House of Commons was precisely the same as that adopted in the United States. It seems almost superfluous to observe that the whole idea on which the Dominion system rests is that of the American federation. The central Parliament manages the common affairs; each province has its own local laws and legislature. There is the greatest possible variety and diversity in the local systems of the different provinces of the Dominion. The members are elected to the House of Commons on the most diverse principles of suffrage. In some of the provinces the vote is open; in others it is given by ballot, in secret.

The Act of Confederation recites that the Constitution of the Dominion shall be similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom. But in truth the only similarity consists in the fact that one of the two chambers is nominated by the Crown, and that the authority of the Crown is represented in the Dominion by the presence of a Governor-General. In all other respects the example of the American Republic has been followed. The keystone of the whole system is that principle of federation which the United States have so long represented, and which consists of local self-government for each member of the Confederacy and the authority of a common Parliament for strictly national affairs. This fact is not an objection to the scheme. It is, on the contrary, the best security for its success. It would have been impossible to establish in Canada anything really resembling the Constitution of England. Uniformity of

legislation would have been unendurable. Nothing could make the Senate of Canada an institution like the English House of Lords. Nomination by the Crown could not do it. There was some wisdom in the objection raised by Mr. Bright to this part of the scheme. A good deal of sentimentalism was talked in Parliament by the Ministers in charge of the Confederation scheme about the filial affection of Canada for the mother country, and the intense anxiety of the Canadians to make their Constitution as like as possible to that of England. The Canadians appear to have very properly thought of their own interests first of all, and they adopted the system which they believed would best suit the conditions under which they lived. In doing so they did much to strengthen and to commend that federative principle on which their Dominion is founded, and which appears likely enough to contain the ultimate solution of the whole problem of government as applied to a system made up of various populations with diverse nationalities, religions, and habitudes. So far as one may judge of the tendencies of modern times, it would seem that the inclination is to the formation of great State systems. The days of small independent States seem to be over. If this be so, it may safely be asserted that great State systems cannot be held together by uniform principles of legislation. The choice would clearly seem to be between small independent States and the principle of federation adopted in the formation of the Dominion of Canada.

The Dominion scheme only provided at first for the Confederation of the two Canadian provinces with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Provision was made, however, for the admission of any other province of British North America which should desire to follow suit. The newly

constructed province of Manitoba, made up out of what had been the Hudson's Bay territories, was the first to come in. It was admitted into the union in 1870. British Columbia and Vancouver's Island followed in 1871, and Prince Edward's Island claimed admission in 1873. The Dominion now embraces the whole of the regions constituting British North America, with the exception of Newfoundland, which still prefers its lonely system of quasi-independence. It may be assumed, however, that this curious isolation will not last long; and the Act constituting the Dominion opens the door for the entrance of this latest lingerer outside whenever she may think fit to claim admission.

The idea of a federation of the provinces of British North America was not new in 1867, or even in the days of Lord Durham. When the delegates of the revolted American colonies were discussing among themselves their terms of federation, they agreed in their articles of union, that Canada "acceding to the Confederation and joining in the measures of the United States, shall be admitted into and entitled to the advantages of the union." No answer to this appeal was made by either of the Canadas, but the idea of union among the British provinces among themselves evidently took root then. As early as 1810 a colonist put forward a somewhat elaborate scheme for the union of the provinces. In 1814 Chief Justice Sewell, of Quebec, submitted a plan of union to the Duke of Kent. In 1827 resolutions were introduced into the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, having relation principally to a combination of the two Canadas, but also suggesting something "more politic, wise, and generally advantageous; viz., an union of the whole four provinces of North America under a viceroyalty, with a facsimile of that great and glorious fabric,

the best monument of human wisdom, the British Constitution." Nothing further, however, was done to advance the principle of federation until after the rebellion in Canada, and the brief dictatorship of Lord Durham. Then, as we have already said, the foundation of the system was laid. In 1849 an association, called the North American League, was formed, which held a meeting in Toronto to promote Confederation. In 1854 the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia discussed and adopted resolutions recommending the closer connection of the British provinces; and in 1857 the same province urged the question upon the consideration of Mr. Labouchere, afterwards Lord Taunton, and then Colonial Secretary. Mr. Labouchere seems to have thought that the Imperial Government had better not meddle or make in the matter, but leave it altogether for the spontaneous action of the colonists. In the following year the coalition Ministry of Canada, during the Governor-Generalship of Sir Francis Head, made a move by entering into communications with the Imperial Government and with the other American provinces. The other provinces hung back however, and nothing came of this effort. Then Nova Scotia tried to get up a scheme of union between herself, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward's Island. Canada offered to enter into the scheme; and in 1864 Mr. Cardwell, then Colonial Secretary, gave it his approval. New conferences were held in Quebec; but the plan was not successful. New Brunswick seems to have held back this time. It was clear, however, that the provinces were steadily moving toward an agreement, and that a basis of federation would be found before long. The maritime provinces always felt some difficulty in seeing their way to union with the Canadas. Their outlying position and their distance from the proposed seat of central government made one obvious

reason for hesitation. Even at the time when the bill for the Confederation was introduced into the House of Lords, Nova Scotia was still holding back. That difficulty, however, was got over, and the Act was passed in March 1867. Lord Monck was made the first Governor-General of the new Dominion, and its first Parliament met at Ottawa in November of the same year.

In 1869 — we are now somewhat anticipating — the Dominion was enlarged by the acquisition of the famous Hudson's Bay territory. When the Charter of the Hudson's Bay Company expired in 1869, Lord Granville, then Colonial Secretary, proposed that the chief part of the Company's territories should be transferred to the Dominion for 300,000*l.*; and the proposition was agreed to on both sides. The Hudson's Bay Charter dated from the reign of Charles II. The region to which it referred carries some of its history imprinted in its names. Prince Rupert was at the head of the association incorporated by the Charter into the Hudson's Bay Company. The name of Rupert's Land perpetuates his memory as that of Prince Edward's Island will remind posterity of Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, father of Queen Victoria. The Hudson's Bay Company obtained from King Charles, by virtue of the Charter in 1670, the sole and absolute government of the vast watershed of Hudson's Bay, the Rupert's Land of the Charter, on condition of paying yearly to the King and his successors "two elks and two black beavers," "whensoever and as often as we, our heirs and successors, shall happen to enter into the said countries, territories, and regions." The Hudson's Bay Company was opposed by the North West Fur Company in 1783, which fought them for a long time with Indians and law, with the tomahawk of the red man and the legal judgment of a Romilly or a Keating. In 1812 Lord Selkirk

founded the Red River Company. This interloper on the battlefield was harassed by the North West Company, and it was not until 1821, when the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies—impoverished by their long warfare—amalgamated their interests, that the Red River settlers were able to reap their harvests in peace, disturbed only be occasional plagues of locusts and blackbirds. In 1835, on Lord Selkirk's death, the Hudson's Bay Company bought the settlement from his executors. It had been under their sway before that, having been committed to their care by Lord Selkirk during his lifetime. The privilege of exclusive trading east of the Rocky Mountains was conferred by Royal license for twenty-one years in May 1838, and some ten years later the Company received a grant of Vancouver's Island for the term of ten years from 1849 to 1859. The Hudson's Bay Company were always careful to foster the idea that their territory was chiefly wilderness, and discountenanced the reports of its fertility and fitness for colonisation which were from time to time brought to the ears of the English Government. In 1857, at the instance of Mr. Labouchere, a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to enquire into the state of the British possessions under the Company's administration. Various Government expeditions, and the publication of many Blue Books enlightened the public mind as to the real nature of those tracts of land which the council from the Fenchurch Street house declared to be so desolate. A curious illustration of the policy adopted by the Hudson's Bay Company is to be found in the contrast between the glowing descriptions of the lands under their sway given by Sir George Simpson, who was for forty years Governor of the Hudson's Bay territories, in his "Overland Journey Round the World," and his evidence given before the Select

Committee of the House of Commons. The Company exerted itself strenuously to defend its interests. The influence of Mr. Edward Ellice, who was at once a director of the Company, a member of the Committee, and a witness, did much to guide the Committee's decision. An amendment of Mr. Gladstone to their unsatisfactory report, urging that all lands capable of colonisation be withdrawn from the Company, and only land incapable of being so treated left to them, was negatived by the casting vote of the chairman. During the sittings of the Committee there was cited in evidence a petition from 575 Red River settlers to the Legislative Assembly of Canada demanding British protection. This appeal was a proceeding curiously at variance with the later action of the settlement. When in 1869 the chief part of the territories was transferred to Canada, on the proposition of Earl Granville, the Red River country rose in rebellion, and refused to receive the new Governor. Louis Riel, the insurgent chief, seized on Fort Garry and the Company's treasury, and proclaimed the independence of the settlement. Sir Garnet, then Colonel, Wolseley, was sent in command of an expedition which reached Fort Garry on August 23, when the insurgents submitted without resistance, and the district received the name of Manitoba.

Thus the Dominion of Canada now stretches from ocean to ocean. The population of British North America did not exceed one million and a half in 1841, at the time of the granting of the Constitution, and it is now over four millions. The revenue of the provinces has multiplied more than twentyfold during the same time. Canada has everything that ought to make a commonwealth great and prosperous. The fisheries of her maritime provinces, the coal and iron of the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, the grain-producing re-

gions of the North-West, the superb St. Lawrence, hardly rivalled on the globe as a channel of commerce from the interior of a country to the ocean—all these are guarantees of a great future. Not unnaturally many in and out of Canada speculate as to the form that future will show. Canada sprang into prosperity when she was allowed to do the work of her political development for herself; the question is will she never demand a more absolute self-government? Will she be captivated by the charms of a distinct national existence? For some years a feeling was spreading in England which began to find expression in repeated and very distinct suggestions that the Canadians had better begin to think of looking out for themselves. Many Englishmen complained of this country being expected to undertake the principal cost of the defences of Canada, and to guarantee her railway schemes, especially when the commercial policy which Canada adopted towards England was one of a strictly protective character. Shall we have to fight the battles of Canada, it was asked; shall we have to become responsible for her railway enterprises; and is Canada not even to give us an open market for our manufactures? On the other hand, some Canadians might well have asked whether Canada was to be always left open as a possible battle-ground on which England's quarrels were to be fought out. If the *Alabama* dispute had led to war, the United States would have invaded Canada. The colonists, who had had nothing to do with the cause of quarrel, would have seen their homesteads exposed to all the dangers and the terrors of invasion. It was natural that such considerations should have their influence on both sides. But, as often happens in our political life, the advocates of the policy which would urge the colonists into independence went just so far as to bring about a reaction. Then for a

while nothing was heard here but the protestations of statesmen that the connection with the Canadas and with all the colonies was the one thing for which they lived. This outcry bore down all others for a time, and the hints as to independence were heard no more. The movement that way had evidently been premature. Indeed, it not only came prematurely, but it came from the wrong side. It ought not to be part of the policy of the mother country to prompt and goad the colonies into independence. If the demand is ever made it ought to be the spontaneous suggestion of the colonies themselves. The question will be settled by the interests of Canada itself when the time for decision comes. Mere protestations of kinship and loyalty and so forth will not count for much in the final settlement. A Canadian official, Mr. J. G. Bourinot, of Ottawa, has argued with much force that there are three destinies open to Canada, one of which she will have some time or other to choose. These are, annexation to the United States, complete independence, and what he calls "consolidation into the empire." For the present at least there cannot be said to be anywhere in Canada a party in favour of annexation to the United States. Such a change is undoubtedly one of the possibilities; and we agree with Mr. Bourinot in thinking it more probable than that the connection with England should always endure on its present conditions. But the question of annexation, which once was a practical and positive reality in Canadian politics, has been losing its vitality steadily ever since the mission of Lord Durham; and just now can hardly be called a living question at all. Independence is sure to become some time or other a demand among Canadians. It is hardly possible to believe that the Dominion should long go on without seeing the rise of a political party whose watchword will be a cry for complete

national independence. The Dominion has already a practical independence. Except for the fact that she receives the Governor-General whom the Sovereign sends out, Canada is as completely mistress of her own destinies as though she were an independent republic. She frames her own tariffs to suit her own interests, and she may even, if she pleases, as Mr. Bourinot says, fix the expenses of her militia and her defences solely with regard to Canadian inclinations. Every year, every event, only makes it more clear that she is virtually independent.

The Letellier controversy, to go forward a few years, is an illustration of this fact. In March 1878, M. Luc Letellier, the Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, quarrelled with his Cabinet, and dismissed the Premier, M. C. B. de Boucherville, and his ministry, alleging, as justification for his act, that the Government was in the habit of passing various measures without his knowledge, and of generally neglecting to consult with him. He then placed M. Joly in office, though M. Joly's ministry were unable to command a majority in the House. A petition was thereupon addressed to the Governor in Council, praying for M. Letellier's dismissal. Lord Lorne's ministers advised him to accede to the petition. Lord Lorne objected, on the ground that though a Governor-General appointed a Lieutenant-Governor on the advice of his ministers, the removal of the Lieutenant-Governor was a matter for his own personal decision. This point of view seemed to be authorised by the words of the Dominion Act; but an appeal from Lord Lorne to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Colonial Secretary, received a reply counselling the Governor-General to give way to his ministers. Thus the Imperial Government withdrew from the representative of the Crown all but the merest semblance of authority, and made him—what indeed he should be, but certainly was not

intended to be at the time when the confederation was formed—the figure-head of the Dominion, the mouth-piece for the utterances of the Canadian legislature. Acting upon the advice of the Colonial Secretary, Lord Lorne gave way, M. Luc Letellier was removed, and with him went the last pretension of England to rule her North American colonies.

Still, there is a vast difference between the charm of a complete and that of a merely virtual independence. The time might come when Canada would feel ambitious of a career and a history all her own. In a merely practical point of view she might object to the dangerous fellowship of a country which is liable to be engaged in wars with states whose fleets might harass Canadian seaports; or whose armies, in at least one case, might cross the Canadian frontier line. The very reasonable policy which might induce England some time to say that the Canadians must defend themselves, might well seem to the Canadians to be appropriately followed up by a declaration on the part of the Dominion, that if she must defend herself, she must be free from responsibility for the foreign policy of England. Independence, therefore, is a possibility of the future, although it has not yet come to be a question in practical politics. But then there is the third possibility to which Mr. Bourinot refers—that of "consolidation into the empire." Canada might become one member of a great English federation, and in that way have a voice in directing the foreign policy of England, while admitting English opinion to a voice in the construction of Canadian tariffs. This question concerns the destinies of most other colonies of Great Britain; of all her colonies in time. What is to come of Australia? That colony has no United States near at hand to suggest a possibility of annexation; and her choice is apparently limited to the alternative of inde-

pendence or "consolidation into the empire." Independence is surely in this case a natural and a possible solution. Australia is well suited by her geographical position and the circumstances of her political growth to form, if it were necessary, a confederation of her own. Australia now consists of five separate colonies—New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, and Queensland; all these are provinces of one vast island, the largest island in the world. We leave New Zealand and even Tasmania out of consideration for the moment. Tasmania, and even New Zealand, might naturally enough form part of an Australian confederation, and should of necessity form part of such a confederation were it Australasian. For the present, however, we prefer to speak of the colonies which are bound together within the shore-lines of the one great island. All these colonies have now representative government, with responsible ministries, and parliamentary chambers. New South Wales is the oldest of the group. Its political life may be said to date from 1853, when it first received what is fairly to be called a constitution. For ten years previously it had possessed a sort of legislature, consisting of a single Chamber, of which half the members were nominee, and the other half elected. One of the most distinguished members of that Chamber for many years was Mr. Lowe, who appears to have learned to hate democratic government from watching over its earliest infancy, as some women imbibe a dislike to all children from having had to do too much nursery-work in their girlhood. Victoria, which was separated from New South Wales in 1851, got her liberal constitution in 1856. The other colonies followed by degrees. The constitutional systems differ among themselves as to certain of their details. The electoral qualification, for example, differs considerably. Generally

speaking, however, they may be set down as all alike illustrating the principles and exercising the influence of representative government. They are training schools for the work of complete independence, if ever it should suit the interests of the Colonies to start absolutely for themselves. They have not got on so far without much confusion and many sad mistakes. The constitutional controversies and difficulties in Victoria and in other Australian colonies are a favourite example with some writers and speakers, to show the failure of the democratic principle in government. But it is always forgotten that the principle of representative government in a colony like Victoria is, as a matter of necessity, that of democracy. Even those who believe the aristocratic influence invaluable in the life of a nation must see that New South Wales and Victoria and Queensland must somehow contrive to do without such an influence. An aristocracy cannot be imported; nor can it be sown in the evening to grow up next morning. The colonists are compelled to construct a system without it. There are many difficulties in their way. It is often carelessly said that they ought to find the work easy enough, because they have the example and the experience of England to guide them. But they have no such guide. The conditions under which the colonies have to create a constitutional system are entirely different from those of England; so different, indeed, that there must be a certain danger of going astray simply from trying to follow England's example under circumstances entirely unlike those of England.

Despite all confusion or blundering, however, it is clear that the Australian colonies are growing and prospering, and that their gradual training in the business of political government will soon bring each of them to the principles and the mechanism best suited for its condition and its

development. All the lessons lately taught by the Home Government have been, and very properly, that they must manage their affairs and compose their domestic quarrels without the intervention of Imperial authority. This has been impressed upon them just as earnestly by Conservative as by Liberal Secretaries of State. The Victorian deadlock, as it was called, is a recent example. It began with a dispute between the two Chambers as to the payment of members. The majority in the Legislative Assembly, or House of Commons, passed as usual the estimate for the payment of members, the system of paying the members having prevailed since 1872. It was thrown out by the Legislative Council, or Senate. The Chief Secretary—or, as we should call him, the Prime Minister—of the colony, Mr. Graham Berry, added the amount to the Appropriation Bill. The Legislative Council refused to pass the Bill. The ministry retorted by dismissing or threatening to dismiss a whole army of Government officials—county court judges, magistrates, coroners, and other functionaries—on the ground that they had not the money to pay their salaries. Constitutional government seemed for the moment to have really come to a deadlock. Both Chambers eagerly appealed to the Governor. The Governor, acting on the advice of the Colonial Office, preserved a strict neutrality. The money question was temporarily settled by a sort of compromise; but the popular Assembly at once set to work, with the assistance of the Colonial Ministry, to diminish the power of the Upper Chamber. They adopted a measure for that purpose; but the question was how to get the Upper Chamber to pass it. Mr. Berry came to England to endeavour to prevail upon the Government here to effect a change in the Victorian constitution by an Imperial decree. The Conservative Secretary of State, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach,

firmly refused to interfere. Only in the very last extremity, it was authoritatively declared, could the mother country interfere in the domestic disputes of a colony having parliamentary institutions and a responsible ministry. This was an important declaration, and it announced a just and wise resolve. The training given by self-government would be of little value or substance indeed if the mother country were to undertake to intervene whenever anything went wrong, and on her own authority try to set it right. The Australian colonies have therefore, like the dominion of Canada, a virtual independence. They have the right of complete self-government. Only the name of a distinct nationality is wanting. As in the case of the dominion of Canada, so too in that of Australia, it is quite possible that the colonists may some time feel inspired by the longing for a national independence. In such a condition of things the geographical situation of Australia would make the experiment seem even more natural than that of Canada. Australia, girt by her oceans, and with the Tasmanian and New Zealand islands for associates, would form a natural federation apart: a federation quite capable of living for itself, and of having in the future a distinct nationality, and perhaps a great history.

But Australia, or Australasia, would also be well fitted to take her part in that wider and grander federation which is already the dream and the faith of many colonists and some Englishmen. This is the third choice which Mr. Bourinot contemplates as offered to the colonies and to England. Why, it is asked, should there not be a great Confederation of England, of Ireland, and of the states that are now colonies? Why should there not be an Imperial Parliament, then truly Imperial, in which each of these separate provinces or states should be represented for common purposes,

while each had separately its local legislature to arrange its own domestic affairs? Why should Canada, should Victoria, should Cape Colony, or Natal, or New Zealand, be left absolutely without a voice in the decision of those important questions of foreign policy, of peace and war, which may have such momentous results for any one of those provinces? A war with the United States would undoubtedly bring on an invasion of Canada. The Crimean war seemed at one time destined to invite a Russian raid upon some of the Australian colonies. Why should colonies like these be allowed no share in deciding the policy which may possibly come to its most momentous issue on their own soil? If the colonies are never to have that voice in Imperial affairs, is it likely that they will long continue merely to hang on to the skirts of England? Then, again, one great difficulty between England and her colonies is caused by the different views which they take on questions of tariff and taxation. Canada, for example, enforces against Great Britain the severest protective system. English politicians and manufacturers chafe so much at this that it seems likely to be the cause at one time or other of a quarrel which no fine phrases on either side can conjure away. An English statesman of the present day has said that as we lost some of our American colonies because we insisted upon taxing them, we may lose the others because we will not permit them to tax us. Might not this difficulty, too, be removed from the path of the future if colonists and inhabitants of the mother country alike sat in the one Imperial legislature, and discussed in common their great common interests? Is not some such principle, indeed, the probable solution of the problem of government for systems made up of various and widely separated provinces and nationalities? Here, too, would be a framework always wide enough for the reception of new

creations. The process which in the American Republic converts first a desert into a territory, and then a territory into a state, would admit new province after new province into this great federated system. Who shall say that even the future relations of the peoples of Hindostan might not be satisfactorily provided for by such a principle of federation? Immense, no doubt, are the difficulties that lie in the way of such a scheme. To many minds it will seem that only the merest dreamers could entertain the idea. But the so-called dreamers would, perhaps, have something to say for the practicable nature of their plan. They might at least retort upon their critics by asking, "What then have you, who call yourselves practical men and despise the dreamers of dreams—what have you to suggest? Do you really believe that things can always go on as they are going now? You have eyes; open them and look beyond your own parish, your own club, coterie, or village, and say whether you think it possible that great colonies like those of British North America and those of Australasia are likely to remain always content with their present anomalous condition, or that your own people would remain for ever content with it even if the colonists were never to complain? What then do you expect? Annexation to America in the one case; independence in the other, or perhaps independence in both, and in all? To that result, if it must come to that, the mind of England would have to reconcile herself. She has no Imperial privilege to interfere with the destinies of the world. But in the meantime would it not be the part of you, the practical men, to consider whether that other suggestion is not more desirable as well as more easy to realise; that scheme of a great federation which should reconcile the several interests and the individual energies of the colonies with the central policy of a great free empire?"

CHAPTER LVI.

"BEGINS WITH SOLDAN, ENDS WITH PRESTER JOHN."

IN the summer of 1867 England received with strange welcome a strange visitor. "Quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes?" Looking forward into the future we may indeed apply yet other words of Dido, and say of the new comer to these shores, "Quibus ille jactatus fatis!" It was the Sultan of Turkey who came to visit England—the Sultan Abdul-Aziz, whose career was to end ten years after in dethronement and suicide. Abdul-Aziz was the first Sultan who ever set his foot on English soil. He was welcomed with a show of enthusiasm which made cool observers wonder and shrug their shoulders. The Cretan insurrection was going on, and the Sultan's generals were doing cruel work among the unfortunate rebels of that Greek race with which the people of England had so long and so loudly professed the deepest sympathy. Yet the Sultan was received by Englishmen with what must have seemed to him a genuine outburst of national enthusiasm. As a matter of course he received the usual Court entertainments; but he was also entertained gorgeously by the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London; he went in state to the Opera and the Crystal Palace; he saw a review of the fleet, in company with the Queen, at Spithead; he was run after and shouted for by vast crowds wherever he showed his dark and melancholy face, on which even then the sullen shadow of the future might seem to have been cast. His presence threw

completely into the background that of his nominal vassal the Viceroy of Egypt, who might otherwise have been a very sufficient lion in himself. Abdul-Aziz doubtless believed in the genuineness of the reception, and thought it denoted a real and a lasting sympathy with him and his State. He did not know how easily crowds are gathered and the fire of popular enthusiasm is lighted in London. The Shah of Persia was to experience the same sort of reception not long after; Garibaldi had enjoyed it not long before; Kossuth had had it in his time. Some of the newspapers politely professed to believe that the visit would be productive of wonderful results to Turkey. The Sultan, it was suggested, would surely return to Constantinople with his head full of new ideas gathered up in the West. He would go back much impressed by the evidences of the blessings of our constitutional government, and the progressive nature of our civic institutions. He would read a lesson in the glass and iron of the Crystal Palace, the solid splendours of the Guildhall. He would learn something from the directors of the railway companies, and something from the Lord Mayor. The Cattle Show at the Agricultural Hall could not be lost on his observant eyes. The result would be a new era for Turkey—another new era: the real new era this time. The poor Sultan's head must have been sadly bemused by all the various sights he was forced to see. He left England just before the public had had time to get tired of him; and the new era did not appear to be any nearer for Turkey after his return home.

Mr. Disraeli astonished and amused the public towards the close of 1867 by a declaration he made at a dinner which was given in his honour at Edinburgh. The company were surprised to learn that he had for many years been a thorough reformer and an advocate of popular

suffrage, and that he had only kept his convictions to himself because it was necessary to instil them gently into the minds of his political colleagues. "I had," he said, "to prepare the mind of the country, and to educate—if it be not arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party. It is a large party, and requires its attention to be called to questions of this kind with some pressure. I had to prepare the mind of Parliament and the country on this question of Reform." All the time, therefore, that Mr. Disraeli was fighting against Reform Bills, he was really trying to lead his party "with a gentle hand, thither, oh, thither," towards the principles of popular reform. This then, people said, is what Vivian Grey meant when he declared that for statesmen who would rule, "our wisdom must be concealed under folly, and our constancy under caprice." Some members of the party which Mr. Disraeli professed to have thus cleverly educated, were a little scandalised and even shocked at the frank composure of his confession; some were offended; it seemed to them that their ingenious instructor had made fools of them. But the general public, as usual, persisted in refusing to take Mr. Disraeli seriously, or to fasten on him any moral responsibility for anything he might say or do. It might have been wrong in another statesman to put on for years the profession of Conservatism in order that he might get more deeply into the confidence of Conservatives and instil into them the principles of Mr. Bright. But in Mr. Disraeli it was of no consequence; that was his way; if he were anything but that he would not be Mr. Disraeli; he would not be leader of the House of Commons; he would not be Prime Minister of England.

For to that it soon came; came at last. "At this moment how many a powerful noble wants only wit to be a

minister; and what wants Vivian Grey to attain the same end?" What Vivian Grey once wanted to attain that end he had long since compassed. Only the opportunity was lately needed to make him Prime Minister; and that opportunity came early in 1868. Lord Derby's health had for some time been so weakly that he was anxious to get rid of the trouble of office as soon as possible. In February 1868 he became so ill that his condition excited the gravest anxiety. He rallied indeed and grew much better; but he took the warning and determined on retiring from office. He tendered his resignation, and it was accepted by the Queen. It fell to the lot of his son, Lord Stanley, to make the announcement in the House of Commons. There was a general regret felt for the retirement of Lord Derby from a leading place in politics; but as soon as it appeared that his physical condition was not actually hopeless, men's minds turned at once from him to his successor. No one could now doubt that Mr. Disraeli's time had come. The patient career, the thirty years' war against difficulties, were to have the long-desired reward. The Queen sent for Mr. Disraeli, and invited him to assume Lord Derby's vacated place and to form a Government. By a curious coincidence the autograph letter containing this invitation was brought from Osborne to the new Prime Minister by General Grey, the man who defeated Mr. Disraeli in his first endeavour to enter the House of Commons. That was the contest for Wycombe in June 1832. It was a memorable contest in many ways. It was the last election under the political conditions which the Reform Bill brought to a close. The Reform Bill had only just been passed when the Wycombe election took place, and had not come into actual operation. The state of the poll is amusing to read of now. Thirty-five voters all told registered their suf-

frages. Twenty-three voted for Colonel Grey, as he then was; twelve were induced to support Mr. Disraeli. Then Mr. Disraeli retired from the contest, and Colonel Grey was proclaimed the representative of Wycombe by a majority of eleven. Nor had Wycombe exhausted in the contest all its electoral strength. There were, it seemed, two voters more in the borough who would have polled, if it were necessary, on the side of Colonel Grey. Mr. Disraeli's successful rival in that first struggle for a seat in Parliament was now the bearer of the Queen's invitation to Mr. Disraeli to become Prime Minister of England. The public in general were well pleased that Mr. Disraeli should reach the object of his ambition. It seemed only the fit return for his long and hard struggle against so many adverse conditions. He had battled with his evil stars; and his triumph over them pleased most of those who had observed the contest. Mr. Frank H. Hill, in that remarkable book, unrivalled in its way, which bears the modest name of "Political Portraits," speaks of Mr. Disraeli's curiously isolated position in the House of Commons. "He sits like a solitary gladiator waiting the signal for combat." The sentence is admirable as a description. Nothing could be happier as a comparison. For the very reason that Mr. Disraeli had always been like the solitary gladiator the public were all the more pleased when his long, lonely struggle "for his own hand" carried off the prize at last. The public never looked on Mr. Disraeli, up to this period of his career at least, as anything but a brilliant gladiator. The author of "Political Portraits" observes, that "Mr. Disraeli's Premiership is remarkable chiefly for the fact that he was Prime Minister." This too was true. It is a correct description of that short season of rule which came to Mr. Disraeli on the retirement of Lord Derby. But if

Mr. Hill were to take up the subject now, he would probably admit that Mr. Disraeli's second Premiership was remarkable for a good many other things besides the fact that he was a second time Prime Minister.

The new Premier made few changes in his Cabinet. His former lieutenant, Lord Cairns, had been for some time one of the Lords Justices of the Court of Chancery. Mr. Disraeli made him Lord Chancellor. In order to do this he had to undertake the somewhat ungracious task of informing Lord Chelmsford, who sat on the woolsack during Lord Derby's tenure of office, that his services would no longer be required. Lord Chelmsford's friends were very angry, and a painful controversy began in the newspapers. It was plainly stated by some of the aggrieved that Lord Chelmsford had been put aside because he had shown himself too firmly independent in his selection of judges. But there seems no reason to ascribe Mr. Disraeli's action to any other than its obvious and reasonable motive. His Ministry was singularly weak in debating talent in the House of Lords. Lord Cairns was one of the best Parliamentary debaters of the day; Lord Chelmsford was hardly entitled to be called a Parliamentary debater at all. Lord Cairns was a really great lawyer; Lord Chelmsford was only a lawyer of respectable capacity. Lord Chelmsford was at that time nearly seventy-five years old, and Lord Cairns was quarter of a century younger. It is surely not necessary to search for ungenerous or improper motives to explain the act of the new Prime Minister in preferring the one man to the other. Mr. Disraeli merely did his duty. Nothing could justify a Minister who had the opportunity and the responsibility of such a choice in deciding to retain Lord Chelmsford rather than to bring in Lord Cairns.

No other change was important. Mr. Ward Hunt, a re-

spectable country gentleman of no great position and of moderate abilities, became Chancellor of the Exchequer in the room of Mr. Disraeli. Mr. Walpole, who had been in the Cabinet for some time without office, retired from the Administration altogether. A good deal of work was got through in the session. A bill was introduced to put a stop to the system of public executions, and passed with little difficulty. The only objection raised was urged by those who thought the time had come for abolishing the system of capital punishment altogether. Public executions had long grown to be a scandal to the country. Every voice had been crying out against them. The author of the "Ingoldsby Legends" had made a public execution the subject of a bitter and painful satire. Dickens had denounced the system with generous vehemence; Thackeray had borne stern testimony to its abominations. A public execution in London was a scene to fill an observer with something like a loathing for the whole human race. Through all the long night before the execution the precincts of the prison became a bivouac ground for the ruffianism of the metropolis. The roughs, the harlots, the professional robbers, and the prospective murderers held high festival there. The air reeked with the smell of strong drink, with filthy jokes and oaths and blasphemy. The soul took its flight as if it were a trapeze-performer in a circus. The moral effect of the scene, as an example to evil-doers, was about as great as the moral effect of a cock-fight. The demoralising effect, however, was broad and deep. It may be doubted whether one in ten thousand of those who for mere curiosity came to see an execution did not go away a worse creature than he had come. As the old-fashioned intramural burial-ground made by its own vapours new corpses to fill it, so the atmosphere of the public execution generated fresh

criminals to exhibit on the scaffold. Posterity will probably wonder how the age which would have scouted the idea of any wholesome effect being wrought by public floggings, could have remained so long under the belief that any manner of good could be done by the system of public executions. Since the change made in 1868, the execution takes place within the precincts of the gaol; it is witnessed by a few selected persons, usually including representatives of the press, and it is certified by the verdict of a coroner's jury.

Another change of ancient system was made by the measure which took away from the House of Commons the power of deciding election petitions. The long-established custom was, that an election petition was referred to a Committee of the House of Commons, who heard the evidence on both sides, and then decided by majority of votes as to the right of the person elected to hold the seat. The system was open to some obvious objections. The one great and crying evil of our electioneering was then the bribery and corruption which attended it. A Parliamentary Committee could hardly be expected to deal very stringently with bribery, seeing that most of the members of the committee were sure to have carried on or authorised bribery on their own account. A false public conscience had grown up with regard to bribery. Few men held it really in hatred. The country gentleman whose own vote, when once he had been elected, was unpurchasable by any money bribe, thought it quite a natural and legitimate thing that he should buy his seat by corrupting voters. As in a former age no gentleman thought it wrong to seduce a woman, so in a very recent day no man with money thought it improper to spend some of his money in corrupting electors. What censure was it likely a country squire would have got fifty years ago if ac-

cused before a council of squires of having seduced some tenant's wife or daughter? Just so much would a rich man have got twenty years ago from a Parliamentary Committee if it were proved that he had allowed his agent to lay out money ingeniously for him in bribes. Then again, the decision of the Parliamentary Committee was very often determined by the political opinions of the majority of its members. Acute persons used to say, that when once the Committee had been formed they could tell what its decision would be. "Show me the men and I'll show you the decision," was the principle. It was not always found to be so in practice. A Committee with a Conservative majority did sometimes decide against a Conservative candidate. A Committee with a majority of Whigs has been known to unseat a Whig occupant. But in general the decision of the Committee was either influenced by the political opinions of its majority, or, what was nearly as bad so far as public influence was concerned, it was believed to be so influenced. There had therefore been for a long time an opinion growing up that something must be done to bring about a reform, and in 1867 a Parliamentary Select Committee reported in favour of abandoning altogether the system of referring election petitions to a tribunal composed of members of the House of Commons. The proposal of this Committee was, that every petition should be referred to one of the Judges of the superior courts at Westminster, with power to decide both law and fact, and to report not only as to the seat but as to the extent of bribery and corruption in the constituency. The Judges themselves strongly objected to having such duties imposed upon them. The Lord Chief Justice stated on their behalf that he had consulted with them, and was charged by them one and all to convey to the Lord Chancellor "their strong and unanimous feeling of insuperable

objection to undertaking functions the effect of which would be to lower and degrade the judicial office, and to destroy, or at all events materially impair, the confidence of the public in the thorough impartiality and inflexible integrity of the Judges, when in the course of their ordinary duties political matters come incidentally before them. Notwithstanding the objections of the Judges, however, the Government, after having made one or two unsuccessful experiments at a measure to institute a new court for the trial of election petitions, brought in a bill to refer such petitions to a single Judge, selected from a list to be made by arrangement among the Judges of the three superior courts. This bill, which was to be in operation for three years as an experiment, was carried without much difficulty. It has been renewed since that time, and slightly altered. The principle of referring election petitions to the decision of a legal tribunal remains in force, and it is very unlikely indeed that the House of Commons will ever recover its ancients privilege. Many members of that House still regret the change. They say, and not unreasonably, that with time and the purifying effect of public opinion the objections to the old system would have died away. A Committee of the House of Commons would have come to regard bribery as all honest and decent men must in time regard it. They would acknowledge it a crime and brand it accordingly. So too it is surely probable that members of the House of Commons sitting to hear an election petition would have got over that low condition of political morals which allowed them to give or be suspected of giving their decision for partisan purposes without regard to facts and to justice. On the other hand, it seems a strange anomaly that a Judge may not only declare the candidate of the majority disentitled to a seat, but declare the candidate of the minority entitled to it. In one

celebrated case of an Irish election the candidate elected by an overwhelming majority was unseated by the decision of the Judge; the candidate who had a very small minority of votes in his favour was installed in the seat. It was obviously absurd to call such a man the representative of the constituency. It is right to say that none of the effects anticipated by the Chief Justice were felt in England. The impartiality of the Judges was never called in question. In Ireland it was otherwise, at least in some instances. Judges are rarely appointed in Ireland who have not held law office; and law office is usually obtained by Parliamentary, in other words, by partisan service. There is not therefore always the same confidence in the impartiality of the Judges in Ireland that prevails in England, and it must be owned that in one or two instances at least, the effect of referring an election petition to the decision of an Irish Judge was not by any means favourable to the public faith either in the dignity or the impartiality of the Bench. Of late years some really stringent measures have been taken against bribery. Several boroughs have been disfranchised altogether because of the gross and seemingly ineradicable corruption that prevailed there. Time, education, and public opinion will probably before long cleanse our political system of the stain of bribery. Before long surely it will be accounted as base to give as to take a bribe.

The House of Lords too abandoned about this time one of their ancient usages; the custom of voting by proxy. A Select Committee of the Peers had recommended that the practice should be discontinued. It was defended of course, as every antiquated and anomalous practice is sure to be defended. It was urged, for example, that no men can be better qualified to understand the great political questions of the day than members of the House of Peers who are

employed in the diplomatic service abroad, and that it is unfair to exclude these men from affirming their opinion by a vote, even though they cannot quit their posts and return home to give the vote in person. This small grievance, if it were one, was very properly held to be of little account when compared with the obvious objections to the practice. The House of Lords, however, were not willing absolutely and for ever to give up the privilege. They only passed a standing order "that the practice of calling for proxies on a division be discontinued, and that two day's notice be given of any motion for the suspension of the order." It is not likely that any attempt will be made to suspend the order and renew the obsolete practice.

The Government ventured this year on the bold but judicious step of acquiring possession of all the lines of telegraph, and making the control of communication by wire a part of the business of the Post Office. They did not succeed in making a very good bargain of it, and for a time the new management resulted in the most distracting confusion. But the country highly approved of the purchase. The Post Office has long been one of the best managed departments of the Civil Service.

An important event in the year's history was the successful conclusion of the expedition into Abyssinia. We have already mentioned that much alarm had long been felt in the country with regard to the fate of a number of British subjects, men and women, who were held in captivity by Theodore King of Abyssinia. A vague mysterious interest hung around Abyssinia. It is a land which claims to have held the primitive Christians, and to have the bones of Saint Mark among its treasury of sacred relics. It held fast to the Christian faith, according to its own views of that faith, when Egypt flung it aside after the Arab invasion.

The Abyssinians trace the origin of their empire back to the time of Solomon when the Queen of Sheba visited him. The Emperor or King of Abyssinia was the Prester John, the mysterious king-priest of the middle ages. If Sir John Mandeville may be accepted as any authority, that traveller avers that the title of Prester John rose from the fact that one of the early kings of Abyssinia went with a Christian knight into a Christian Church in Egypt and was so charmed with the service that he vowed he would thenceforth take the title of priest. He further declared, that "he wolde have the name of the first preest that wente out of the Chirche; and his name was John." A traveller whom not a few were disposed to class with Sir John Mandeville, brought back to Europe in a later day some marvellous tales of the Abyssinians. An advertisement prefixed to the third volume of Buffon's "History of Birds," acknowledges "the free and generous communication which I had of the drawings and observations of Mr. James Bruce who, returning from Numidia and the interior parts of Abyssinia, stayed in my house for several days, and made me a partaker of the knowledge which he had acquired in a tour no less fatiguing than hazardous." The publication of Bruce's "Travels in Abyssinia," excited an interest which was further inflamed by the fierce controversy as to the accuracy of his statements and descriptions. Some at least of Bruce's most disputed assertions have been confirmed since his day by the observations of other travellers. The curiosity as to the land of Prester John was revived for modern times by Bruce and the controversy Bruce called up, and in addition to the public anxiety on account of the English prisoners, there was in England a certain vague expectation of marvellous results to come of a military expedition into the land of ancient mystery. Among the captives in Theodore's hands

were Captain Cameron, her Majesty's Consul at Massowah, with his secretary and some servants; Mr. Hormuzd Rassam, a Syrian Christian and naturalised subject of the Queen; Lieutenant Prideaux, and Dr. Blanc. These men were made prisoners while actually engaged on official business of the English Government, and the expedition was therefore formally charged to recover them. But there were several other captives as well, whom the Commander-in-Chief was enjoined to take under his protection. There were German missionaries and their wives and children, some of the women being English; some teachers, artists, and workmen, all European. The quarrel which led to the imprisonment of these people was of old standing. Some of the missionaries had been four years in duresse before the expedition was sent out to their rescue. In April 1865, Lord Chelmsford had called the attention of the House of Lords to the treatment which certain British subjects were then receiving at the hands of Theodore, the Negus or supreme ruler of Abyssinia. Theodore was a usurper. Few Eastern sovereigns who have in any way made their mark on history, from Haroun-al-Raschid and Saladin downwards, can be described by any other name than that of usurper. Theodore seems to have been a man of strong barbaric nature, a compound of savage virtue and more than savage ambition and cruelty. He was a sort of wild and barbarous Philip of Macedon. He was open to passionate and lasting friendships; his nature was swept by stormy gusts of anger and hatred. His moods of fury and of mildness came and went like the thunderstorms and calms of a tropic region. He had had a devoted friendship for Mr. Plowden, a former English Consul at Massowah, who had actually lent Theodore his help in putting down a rebellion, and was killed by the rebels in consequence. When Theodore had crushed

the rebellion, he slaughtered more than a hundred of the rebel prisoners as a sacrifice to the manes of his English Patroclus. Captain Cameron was sent to succeed Mr. Plowden. It should be stated that neither Mr. Plowden nor Captain Cameron was appointed Consul for any part of Abyssinia. Massowah is an island off the African shore of the Red Sea. It is in Turkish ownership and forms no part of Abyssinia, although it is the principal starting point to the interior of that country from Egypt, and the great outlet for Abyssinian trade. Consuls were sent to Massowah, according to the terms of Mr. Plowden's appointment in 1848, "for the protection of British trade with Abyssinia and with the countries adjacent thereto." Mr. Plowden, however, had made himself an active ally of King Theodore, a course of proceeding which naturally gave great dissatisfaction to the English Government. Captain Cameron, therefore, received positive instructions to take no part in the quarrels of Theodore and his subjects, and was reminded by Lord John Russell that he held "no representative character in Abyssinia." It probably seemed to Theodore that the attitude of England was altered and unfriendly, and thus the dispute began which led to the seizure of the missionaries. Captain Cameron seems to have been much wanting in discretion; and Theodore suspected him of intriguing with Egypt. Theodore wrote a letter to Queen Victoria requesting help against the Turks, and for some reason the letter remained unanswered. A story went that Theodore cherished a strong ambition to become the husband of the Queen of England, and even represented that his descent from the Queen of Sheba made him not unworthy of such an alliance. Whether he ever put his proposals into formal shape or not, it is certain that misunderstandings arose; that Theodore fancied himself slighted;

and that he wreaked his wrongs by seizing all the British subjects within his reach, and throwing them into captivity. They were put in chains and kept in Magdala, his rock-based capital. Consul Cameron was among the number. He had imprudently gone back into Abyssinia from Massowah, and was at once pounced upon by the furious descendant of Prester John.

The English Government had a difficult task before them. It seemed not unlikely that the first movement made by an invading expedition might be the signal for the massacre of the prisoners. The effect of conciliation was therefore tried in the first instance. Mr. Rassam, who held the office of Assistant British Resident at Aden, a man who had acquired some distinction under Mr. Layard in exploring the remains of Nineveh and Babylon, was sent on a mission to Theodore with a message from Queen Victoria. Lieutenant Prideaux and Dr. Blanc were appointed to accompany him. Theodore played with Mr. Rassam for a while, and then added him and his companions to the number of the captives. Theodore seems to have become more and more possessed with the idea that the English Government were slighting him; and one or two unlucky mishaps or misconceptions gave him some excuse for cherishing the suspicion in his jealous and angry mind. At last an ultimatum was sent by Lord Stanley, demanding the release of the captives within three months on penalty of war. This letter does not seem to have ever reached the King's hands. The Government made preparations for war, and appointed Sir Robert Napier, now Lord Napier of Magdala, then Commander-in-Chief of the army of Bombay, to conduct the expedition. A winter sitting of Parliament was held in November 1867, supplies were voted, and the expeditionary force set out from Bombay.

The expedition was well managed. Its work was, if we may use a somewhat homely expression, done to time. The military difficulties were not great; but the march had to be made across some four hundred miles of a mountainous and roadless country. The army had to make its way, now under burning sun, and now amid storms of rain and sleet, through broken and perplexing mountain gorges and over mountain heights ten thousand feet above the sea level. Anything like a skilful resistance, even such resistance as savages might well have been expected to make, would have placed the lives of all the force in the utmost danger. The mere work of carrying the supplies safely along through such a country was of itself enough to keep the energies of the invading army on the utmost strain. Meanwhile the captives were dragging out life in the very bitterness of death. The King still oscillated between caprices of kindness and impulses of cruelty. He sometimes strolled in upon the prisoners in careless undress; perhaps in European shirt and trousers, without a coat; and he cheerily brought with him a bottle of wine, which he insisted on the captives sharing with him. At other times he visited them in the mood of one who loved to feast his eyes on the anticipatory terrors of the victims he has determined to destroy. He had still great faith in the fighting power of his Abyssinians. Sometimes he was in high spirits, and declared that he longed for an encounter with the invaders. At other moments, however, and when the steady certain march of the English soldiers was bringing them nearer and nearer, he seems to have lost heart and become impressed with a boding conviction that nothing would ever go well with him again. One description given of him as he looked into the gathering clouds of an evening sky and drew melancholy auguries of his own fate, makes him appear like a barbaric

Antony watching the rack dislimn and likening its dispersion to his own vanishing fortunes. Sir Robert Napier arrived in front of Magdala in the beginning of April 1868. One battle was fought on the tenth of the month. Perhaps it ought not to be called a battle. It is better to say that the Abyssinians made such an attack on the English troops as a bull sometimes makes on a railway train in full motion. The Abyssinians attacked with wild courage and spirit. The English weapons and the English discipline simply swept the assailants away. Others came on; wild charges were made again and again; five hundred Abyssinians were killed and three times as many wounded. Not one of the English force was killed, and only nineteen men were wounded.

Then Theodore tried to come to terms. He sent back all the prisoners, who at last found themselves safe and free under the protection of the English flag. But Theodore would not surrender. Sir Robert Napier had therefore no alternative but to order an assault on his stronghold. Magdala was perched upon cliffs so high and steep, that it was said a cat could not climb them except at two points—one north, and one south—at each of which a narrow path led up to a strong gateway. The attack was made by the northern path, and despite all the difficulties of the ascent, the attacking party reached the gate, forced it, and captured Magdala. Those who first entered found Theodore's dead body inside the gate. Defeated and despairing he had died in the high Roman fashion: by his own hand.

The rock-fortress of King Theodore was destroyed by the conqueror. Sir Robert Napier was unwilling to leave the place in its strength, because he had little doubt that if he did so it would be seized upon by a fierce Mahomedan tribe, the bitter enemies of the Abyssinian Christians. He

therefore dismantled and destroyed the place. "Nothing," to use his own language, "but blackened rock remains" of what was Magdala. The expedition returned to the coast almost immediately. In less than a week after the capture of Magdala it was on its march to the sea. On June 21, the troop-ship *Crocodile* arrived at Plymouth with the first detachment of troops from Abyssinia. Nothing could have been more effectively planned, conducted, and timed than the whole expedition. It went and came to the precise moment appointed for every movement, like an express train. That was its great merit. Warlike difficulties it had none to encounter. No one can doubt that such difficulties too, had they presented themselves, would have been encountered with success. The struggle was against two tough enemies, climate and mountain; and Sir Robert Napier won. He was made Baron Napier of Magdala, and received a pension. The thanks of both Houses of Parliament were voted to the army of Abyssinia and its commander. It was on this occasion that Mr. Disraeli delivered that astonishing burst of eloquence which for the hour turned the attention of the country away from Lord Napier's triumph, and almost succeeded in making the capture of Magdala seem ridiculous. Lord Napier, Mr. Disraeli declared, had led the elephants of India bearing the artillery of Europe through African passes which might have startled the trapper of Canada and appalled the hunter of the Alps; and he wound up by proclaiming, that "the standard of St. George was hoisted upon the mountains of Rasselas." All England smiled at the mountains of Rasselas. The idea that Johnson actually had in his mind the very Abyssinia of geography and of history, when he described his Happy Valley, was in itself trying to gravity. Of the rhetorical

passage, it is proper to speak in the words with which the author of Rasselas once interrupted the too ambitious eloquence of a friend. "Sir, this is sorry stuff," said Dr. Johnson, "let me not hear you say it any more." The worst of Mr. Disraeli's burst of eloquence was, that it could not be got rid of so easily. The orator himself might have gladly consented to let it be heard no more. But the world would not so willingly let it die. Ever since that time, when the expedition to Abyssinia is mentioned in any company, a smile steals over some faces, and more than one voice is heard to murmur an allusion to the mountains of Rasselas.

The widow of King Theodore died in the English camp before the return of the expedition. Theodore's son Alamayou, aged seven years, was taken charge of by Queen Victoria, and for a while educated in India. The boy was afterwards brought to England; but he never reached maturity. All the care that could be taken of him here did not keep him from withering under the influence of an uncongenial civilisation. His young life was as that of some exotic that will not long bear the transplantation to a foreign air. Doubtless too the premature tumult and troubles of his early years told heavily against him. "There is little difficulty," says the grim leech in the "Fair Maid of Perth," "in blighting a flower exhausted from having been made to bloom too soon."

No attempt was made to interfere with the internal affairs of Abyssinia. Having destroyed their monarchy, the invaders left the Abyssinians to do as they would for the establishment of another. Sir Robert Napier declared one of the chiefs a friend of the British, and this chief had some hopes of obtaining the sovereignty of the country. But his

rank as a friend of the British did not prevent him from being defeated in a struggle with a rival, and this latter not long after succeeded in having himself crowned king under the title of John the Second. Another Prester John was set up in Abyssinia.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE IRISH CHURCH.

"THE Irish Peasant to his Mistress" is the name of one of Moore's finest songs. The Irish peasant tells his mistress of his undying fidelity to her. "Through grief and through danger" her smile has cheered his way. "The darker our fortunes the purer thy bright love burned"; it turned shame into glory; fear into zeal. Slave as he was, with her to guide him he felt free. She had a rival; and the rival was honoured, "while thou wert mocked and scorned." The rival wore a crown of gold; the other's brows were girt with thorns. The rival wooed him to temples, while the loved one lay hid in caves. "Her friends were all masters, while thine, alas, are slaves!" "Yet," he declares, "cold in the earth at thy feet I would rather be than wed one I love not, or turn one thought from thee."

The reader already understands the meaning of this poetic allegory. If he failed to appreciate its feeling it would be hardly possible for him to understand the modern history of Ireland. The Irish peasant's mistress is the Catholic Church. The rival is the State Church set up by English authority. The worshippers in the Catholic faith had long to lie hid in caves, while the followers of the State Church worshipped in temples. The Irish peasant remained through centuries of persecution devotedly faithful to the Catholic Church. Nothing could win or wean him from it. The Irish population of Ireland—there is meaning in the

words—were made apparently by nature for the Catholic faith. Hardly any influence on earth could make the genuine Celtic Irishman a Materialist, or what is called in France a Voltairean. For him, as for Schiller's immortal heroine, the kingdom of the spirits is easily opened. Half his thoughts, half his life, belong to a world other than the material world around him. The supernatural becomes almost the natural for him. The streams, the valleys, the hills of his native country are peopled by mystic forms and melancholy legends, which are all but living things for him. Even the railway has not banished from the land his familiar fancies and dreams. The "good people" still linger around the raths and glens. The banshee even yet laments, in dirge-like wailings, the death of the representative of each ancient house. The very superstitions of the Irish peasant take a devotional form. They are never degrading. His piety is not merely sincere: it is even practical. It sustains him against many hard trials, and enables him to bear, in cheerful patience, a lifelong trouble. He praises God for everything; not as an act of mere devotional formality, but as by instinct; the praise naturally rising to his lips. Old men and women in Ireland who seem, to the observer, to have lived lives of nothing but privation and suffering, are heard to murmur with their latest breath the fervent declaration that the Lord was good to them always. Assuredly this genuine piety does not always prevent the wild Celtic nature from breaking forth into fierce excesses. Stormy outbursts of passion, gusts of savage revenge, too often sweep away the soul of the Irish peasant from the quiet moorings in which his natural piety and the teachings of his Church would hold it. But deep down in his nature is that faith in the other world and its visible connection and intercourse with this; his reverence for the teaching which shows him a

clear title to immortality. For this very reason, when the Irish peasant throws off altogether the guidance of religion, he is apt to rush into worse extravagances and excesses than most other men. He is not made to be a rationalist; he is made to be a believer.

The Irishman was bound by ties of indescribable strength and complication to his own Church. It was the teacher of that faith which especially commended itself to his nature and his temperament. It was made to be the symbol and the synonym of patriotism and nationality. Centuries of the cruel, futile attempt to force another religion on him in the name of his English conquerors, had made him regard any effort to change his faith, even by argument, as the attempt of a spy to persuade a soldier to forsake his flag. To abandon the Catholic Church was, for the Irishman, not merely to renounce his religion, but to betray his country. It seemed to him that he could not become a Protestant without also becoming a renegade to the national cause. The State Church set up in Ireland was to him a symbol of oppression. It was Gessler's hat stuck up in the market-place; only a slave would bow down to it. It was idle to tell him of the free spirit of Protestantism; Protestantism stood represented for him by the authority which had oppressed his fellow-countrymen and fellow-Catholics for generations; which had hunted men to the caves and the mountains for being Catholic, and had hanged and disembowelled them for being Irish. Almost every page of the history of the two countries was read with a different interpretation by the Irishman and the Englishman. To the English student Spenser was a patriot as well as a poet; to the Irish scholar he was the bitterest and most unthinking enemy of Ireland. To the Englishman of modern days Cromwell was a great statesman and patriot; the Irishman

thought of him only as the remorseless oppressor of Ireland and the author of the massacre of Drogheda. The Englishman hated James II. because he fought against England at the Boyne; the Irishman despised him because be gave up the fight so soon. Chesterfield was to Englishmen a fribble and a fop; he was to Irishmen of education the one English Lord-Lieutenant who ever seemed to have any comprehension of the real needs of Ireland. Fox was denounced in England and adored in Ireland because he made himself the champion of the principle of governing Ireland according to Irish ideas. One of Byron's chief offences in the eyes of English Conservatives was that his enthusiasm for Ireland was almost equal to his enthusiasm for Greece. Again and again, in every generation, the object of admiration to Englishmen was the object of distrust or dislike, or both, to all Irishmen who professed to have in them anything of the sentiment of nationality. All this feeling of antagonism was undoubtedly strengthened and sharpened by the existence of the State Church. There was not one rational word to be said on principle for the maintenance of such an institution. Sydney Smith said, in his humorous way: "There is no abuse like it in all Europe, in all Asia, in all the discovered parts of Africa, and in all we have heard of Timbuctoo." No foreign statesman probably ever admired English institutions more than Count Cavour did. Yet Cavour wrote that the State Church in Ireland "remains to the Catholics a representative of the cause of their miseries, a sign of defeat and oppression. It exasperates their sufferings and makes their humiliation more keenly felt." Every argument in favour of the State Church in England was an argument against the State Church in Ireland. The English Church, as an institution, is defended on the ground that it represents the religious convictions of the great

majority of the English people, and that it is qualified to take welcome charge of those who would otherwise be left without any religious care or teaching in England. The Catholics in Ireland were, to all other denominations together, as five to one; the State Church represented only a small proportion of a very small minority. There was not the slightest pretext for affecting to believe that it could become the mother and the guardian of orphans and waifs among the Irish people. In many places the Protestant clergyman preached to a dozen listeners; in some places he thought himself lucky when he could get half a dozen. There were places with a Protestant clergyman and Protestant church and absolutely no Protestant worshippers. There had not of late years been much positive hostility to the State Church among the Irish people. Since the abolition of the system of tithes, since the dues of the parson were no longer collected by an armed military force with occasional accompaniment of bloodshed, the bitterness of popular feeling had very much mitigated. The Irish people grew to be almost indifferent on the subject. "With Henry II.," says Sydney Smith, "came in tithes, to which, in all probability, about one million of lives may have been sacrificed in Ireland." All that was changed at last. So long as the clergyman was content to live quietly and mind his own flock, where he had any to mind, his Catholic neighbours were not disposed to trouble themselves much about him. If, indeed, he attempted to do that which, by all strict logical reasoning, he must have regarded himself as appointed to do—if he attempted any work of conversion, then he aroused such a storm of anger that he generally found it prudent to withdraw from the odious and hopeless enterprise. If he was a sensible man he was usually content to minister to his own people and meddle no further with

others. In the large towns he generally had his considerable congregation, and was busy enough. In some of the country places of the south and west he preached every Sunday to his little flock of five or six, while the congregation of the Catholic chapel a short distance off were covering great part of the hillside around the chapel door, because their numbers were many times too great to allow them to find room within the building itself. Sydney Smith has described, in a few words, the condition of things as it existed in his time: "On an Irish Sabbath the bell of a neat parish church often summons to church only the parson and an occasionally conforming clerk; while two hundred yards off a thousand Catholics are huddled together in a miserable hovel and pelted by all the storms of heaven." In days nearer to our own the miserable hovel had for the most part given place to a large and handsome church; in many places to a vast and stately cathedral. Nothing could be more remarkable than the manner in which the voluntary offerings of the Irish Catholics covered the face of the country with churches dedicated to the uses of their faith. Often the contributions came in liberal measure from Irishmen settled in far-off countries who were not likely ever again to see their native fields. Irish Catholic priests crossed the Atlantic, crossed even the Pacific, to ask for help to maintain their churches; and there came from Quebec and Ontario, from New York, New Orleans and Chicago, from Melbourne and Sydney, from Tasmania and New Zealand, the money which put up churches and spires on the Irish mountain-sides. The proportion between the Protestants and the Catholics began to tell more and more disadvantageously for the State Church as years went on. Of late the influx of the Catholic working population into the northern province threatens to

overthrow the supremacy of Protestantism in Protestantism's own stronghold.

It has often been said that if England had not persecuted the Catholics, if she had not thrust her State Church on them under circumstances which made it an insolent badge of conquest, the Irish people might have been gradually won over to the religion of England. To us nothing seems more unlikely than any such change. The Irish people, we are convinced, would under any circumstances whatever have remained faithful to the Catholic Church. As we have already endeavoured to show, it is the Church which seems specially appointed to be the guide of their feelings and their nature. But it is certain that if there had been no persecution and no State Church the feelings of the Irish people towards England would have been very different from what they actually are even at this day. There would have been no rebellion of 1798. There would have been no hatred of Protestant to Catholic, Catholic to Protestant. All this is obvious; everyone says as much now. But there is another view of the question; there is another harmful effect of the State Church and its surroundings, which is not so often considered nor so commonly admitted. This is the indirect harm which was done by the setting up in Ireland of a "British party," to employ a phrase once familiar in politics, a party supposed to represent the interests of the English Government, and indeed to be, as it was commonly called, the Protestant garrison in Ireland. Naturally the Government always acted on the advice of that party, and as a matter of course they were frequently deceived. The British party had no way of getting at the real feelings of the Irish people; they were among them, but not of them. They kept on continually assuring the Government that

there was no real cause of dissatisfaction in Ireland; that the objection to this or that odious institution or measure came only from a few agitators, and not from the whole population. It will not be forgotten that down to the very outbreak of the American War of Independence there were the remnants of a British party in the Northern States, who assured the English Government that there was no real dissatisfaction among the American colonists, and no idea whatever of severing the connection with England. The same sort of counsel was given, the same fatal service was rendered, on almost all important occasions by the British party in Ireland. It was probably from observing this condition of things that Mr. Gladstone came to the conclusion that the Fenian outbreak, the Manchester rescue, and the Clerkenwell explosion furnished a proper opportunity for a new system of legislation in Ireland. Few actions on the part of a public man have been more persistently misrepresented or more obstinately misunderstood than the course taken by Mr. Gladstone. It has been constantly asserted that he declared himself impelled to propose new legislation for Ireland by the violence of the Fenian enterprises, and that he thus held out a premium to political agitation of the most audacious kind by offering an assurance to the agitator that if he would only be daring and lawless enough he might have full gratification of his demands. Yet Mr. Gladstone's meaning was surely plain. He saw that the one great difficulty in the way of substantial legislation for Irish grievances had always been found in the fact that the English Parliament and public did not believe in the reality of the grievance. Englishmen put aside every claim made on behalf of Ireland with the assurance that the Irish people were entirely indifferent on the subject; that the Irish people felt no grievance, and therefore had not complained

of any. The Fenian movement was in Mr. Gladstone's eyes the most substantial refutation of this comfortable belief. The most easy-going and self-complacent Philistine could not feel satisfied that there was no grievance pressing on the minds of the Irish people when he found rebellion going on under his very eyes, and Fenian devotees braving death for their cause and its captains in his very streets. Mr. Gladstone was right. One of the sad defects of our parliamentary system is that no remedy is likely to be tried for any evil until the evil has made its presence felt in some startling way. The Clerkenwell explosion was but one illustration of a common condition of things. We seldom have any political reform without a previous explosion.

On March 16, 1868, a remarkable debate took place in the House of Commons. It had for its subject the condition of Ireland, and it was introduced by a series of resolutions which Mr. John Francis Maguire, an Irish member, proposed. Mr. Maguire was a man of high character and great ability and earnestness. He was a newspaper proprietor and an author; he knew Ireland well, but he also knew England and the temper of the English people. He was ardent in his national sympathies; but he was opposed to any movement of a seditious or a violent character. He had more than once risked his popularity among his countrymen by the resolute stand which he made against any agitation that tended towards rebellion. Mr. Maguire always held that the geographical situation of England and Ireland rendered a separation of the two countries impossible. He had often expressed his belief that even in the event of a war between England and some foreign State—the American Republic, for instance—and even in the event of England's losing temporary possession of Ireland, one of the conditions of peace which the foreign Power would most freely

accept would be the handing back of Ireland to Great Britain. To his mind, then, separation was a result not to be seriously thought of. But he accepted cordially the saying of Grattan that if the ocean forbade separation, the sea denied union. He was in favour of a domestic legislature for Ireland, and he was convinced that such a measure would be found the means of establishing a true and genial union of feeling, a friendly partnership between the two countries. Mr. Maguire was looked on with respect and confidence by all parties in England as well as in his own country. Even the Fenians, whose schemes he condemned as he had condemned the Young Ireland movement of 1848, were willing to admit his honesty and his courage, for they found that there was no stauncher advocate in Parliament for a generous dealing with the Fenian prisoners. A speaker of remarkable power and earnestness, although occasionally too vehement of words and gesture, he was always listened to with attention in the House of Commons. It was well known that he had declined tenders of office from both of the great English parties; and it was known too that he had done this at a time when his personal interests made his refusal a considerable sacrifice. When therefore he invited the attention of the House of Commons to the condition of Ireland, the House knew that it was likely to have a fair and a trustworthy exposition of the subject. In the course of his speech, Mr. Maguire laid great stress upon the evil effect wrought upon Ireland by the existence of the Irish Church. He described it as "a scandalous and monstrous anomaly." During the debate Lord Mayo, then Irish Secretary, made a speech in which he threw out some hint about a policy of equalising all religious denominations in Ireland without sacrificing the Irish Church. He talked in a mysterious way of "levelling

up, and not levelling down." It has never since been known for certain whether he was giving a hint of a scheme actually in the mind of the Government; whether he was speaking as one set up to feel his way into the opinion of the House of Commons and the public; or whether he was only following out some sudden and irresponsible speculations of his own. The words, however, produced a great effect on the House of Commons. It became evident at once that the question of the Irish Church was making itself at last a subject for the practical politician. Mr. Bright in the course of the debate strongly denounced the Irish Establishment, and enjoined the Government and all the great English parties to rise to the occasion and resolve to deal in some serious way with the condition of Ireland. Difficulties of the gravest nature he fully admitted were yet in the way, but he reminded the House in tones of solemn and penetrating earnestness that "to the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." But it was on the fourth night of the debate that the importance of the occasion became fully manifest. Then it was that Mr. Gladstone spoke, and declared that in his opinion the time had come when the Irish Church as a State institution must cease to exist. Then every man in the House knew that the end was near. Mr. Maguire withdrew his resolutions. The cause he had to serve was now in the hands of one who, though not surely more earnest for its success, had incomparably greater power to serve it. The Protestant garrison in Ireland was doomed. There was probably not a single Englishman capable of forming an opinion who did not know that from the moment when Mr. Gladstone made his declaration, the fall of the Irish State Church had become merely a question of time. Men only waited to see how Mr. Gladstone would proceed to procure its fall.

Public expectation was not long kept in suspense. A few days after the debate on Mr. Maguire's motion, Mr. Gladstone gave notice of a series of resolutions on the subject of the Irish State Church. The resolutions were three in number. The first declared that in the opinion of the House of Commons it was necessary that the Established Church of Ireland should cease to exist as an Establishment, due regard being had to all personal interests and to all individual rights of property. The second resolution pronounced it expedient to prevent the creation of new personal interests by the exercise of any public patronage; and the third asked for an address to the Queen, praying that Her Majesty would place at the disposal of Parliament her interest in the temporalities of the Irish Church. The object of these resolutions was simply to prepare for the actual disestablishment of the Church, by providing that no further appointments should be made, and that the action of patronage should be stayed, until Parliament should decide the fate of the whole institution. On March 30, 1868, Mr. Gladstone proposed his resolutions. Not many persons could have had much doubt as to the result of the debate. But if there were any such their doubts must have begun to vanish when they read the notice of amendment to the resolutions which was given by Lord Stanley. The amendment proclaimed even more surely than the resolutions the impending fall of the Irish Church. Lord Stanley must have been supposed to speak in the name of the Government and the Conservative party; and his amendment merely declared that the House, while admitting that considerable modifications in the temporalities of the Church in Ireland might appear to be expedient, was of opinion "that any proposition tending to the disestablishment or disendowment of that Church ought to be reserved for the decision

of the new Parliament." Mr. Gladstone seized on the evidence offered by the terms of such an amendment. He observed that before the hour at which notice was given of that amendment, he had thought the thread of the remaining life of the Irish Established Church was short, but since the notice was given he thought it shorter still. For, as Mr. Gladstone put it, suppose his resolutions had been declarations calling for the abolition of the House of Lords, was it possible to conceive that the Government would have met them by an amendment admitting that the constitution of the Upper House might appear to stand in need of considerable modification, but offering the opinion that any proposal tending to the abolition of that House ought to be left to the decision of a new Parliament? If such an amendment were offered by the Government, the whole country would at once understand that it was not intended to defend the existence of the House of Lords. So the country now understood with regard to the Irish Church. Lord Stanley's amendment asked only for delay. It did not plead that to-morrow would be sudden; it only asked that the stroke of doom should not be allowed to fall on the Irish Church to-day.

The debate was one of great power and interest. Some of the speakers were heard at their very best. Mr. Bright made a speech which was well worthy of the occasion and the orator. Mr. Gathorne Hardy was in his very element. He flung aside all consideration of amendment, compromise, or delay, and went in for a vehement defence of the Irish Church. He spoke in the spirit of M. Rouher's famous *Jamais!* Mr. Hardy was not a debater of keen logical power nor an orator of genuine inspiration, but he always could rattle a defiant drum with excellent effect. He beat the war-drum this time with tremendous energy. On the other

hand Mr. Lowe threw an intensity of bitterness remarkable even for him into the unsparing logic with which he assailed the Irish Church. That Church, he said, was "like an exotic brought from a far country, tended with infinite pains and useless trouble. It is kept alive with the greatest difficulty and at great expense in an ungenial climate and an ungrateful soil. The curse of barrenness is upon it. It has no leaves, puts forth no blossom, and yields no fruit. Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Not the least remarkable speech of the debate was that made by Lord Cranbourne, who denounced the Government of which he was not long since a member with an energy of hatred almost like ferocity. He accused his late colleagues of having in every possible way betrayed the cause of Conservatism, and he assailed Mr. Disraeli personally in a manner which made older members think of the days when Mr. Disraeli was denouncing Sir Robert Peel. No eloquence and no invective however could stay the movement begun by Mr. Gladstone. When the division was called there were 331 votes for the resolutions and only 270 against them. The doom of the Irish Church was pronounced by a majority of 61. Mr. Disraeli made a wild effort by speech and by letter to get up an alarm in the country on the score of some imaginary alliance or conspiracy between "High Church Ritualists" and "Irish Romanists." The attempt was a complete failure; there was only a little flash; no explosion came. The country did not show the slightest alarm. An interval was afforded for agitation on both sides. The House of Commons had only decided against Lord Stanley's amendment. Mr. Gladstone's resolutions had yet to be discussed. Lord Russell presided at a great meeting held in St. James's Hall for the purpose of expressing public sympathy with the movement to disestablish the Irish

Church. Many meetings were held by those on the other side of the question as well; but it was obvious to every one that there was no great force in the attempt at a defence of the Irish Church. That institution had in truth a position which only became less and less defensible the more it was studied. Every example and argument drawn from the history of the Church of England was but another condemnation of the Church of Ireland. During one of the subsequent debates in the House of Lords, Lord Derby introduced with remarkable effect an appropriate quotation from Scott's "Guy Mannering." He was warning his listeners that if they helped the enemies of the Irish Church to pull it down, they would be preparing the way for the destruction of the English Church as well. He turned to that striking passage in "Guy Mannering," where Meg Merrilies confronts the laird of Ellangowan after the eviction of the gipsies, and warns him that "this day have ye quenched seven smoking hearths;—see if the fire in your ain parlour burn the blyther for that; ye have riven the thack off seven cottar houses—look if your ain roof-tree stand the faster." Nothing could be more apt as a political appeal or more effective in a rhetorical sense than this quotation. But it did not illustrate the relations between the English and the Irish Church. The real danger to the English Church would have been a protracted and obstinate maintenance of the Church of Ireland. It is not necessary here to enter upon any of the general arguments for or against the principle of a State Church. But it will be admitted by every one that the claim made on behalf of the Church of England is that it is the Church of the great majority of the English people, and that it has a spiritual work to do which the majority of the nation admit to be its appropriate task. To maintain the Church of England on that ground is only to condemn the

Church of Ireland. The more strongly an Englishman was inclined to support his own Church, the more anxious he ought to have been to repudiate the claim of the Irish Church to a similar position. The State Church in Ireland was like a mildewed ear blasting its wholesome brother. If the two institutions had to stand or fall together, there could be but one end to the difficulty; both must fall.

Mr. Gladstone's first resolution came to a division about a month after the defeat of Lord Stanley's amendment. It was carried by a majority somewhat larger than that which had rejected the amendment. 330 votes were given for the resolution; 265 against it. The majority for the resolution was therefore 65. Mr. Disraeli quietly observed that the Government must take some decisive step in consequence of that vote; and a few days afterwards it was announced that as soon as the necessary business could be got through, Parliament would be dissolved and an appeal made to the country. On the last day of July the dissolution took place, and the elections came on in November. Not for many years had there been so important a general election. The keenest anxiety prevailed as to its results. The new constituencies created by the Reform Bill were to give their votes for the first time. The question at issue was not merely the existence of the Irish State Church. It was a general struggle of advanced Liberalism against Toryism. No one could doubt that Mr. Gladstone, if he came into power, would enter on a policy of more decided Liberalism than had ever been put into action since the days of the Reform Bill of Lord Grey and Lord John Russell. The result of the elections was on the whole what might have been expected. The Liberals had a great majority. But there were many curious and striking instances of the grow-

ing strength of Conservatism in certain parts of the country. Lancashire, once a very stronghold of Liberalism, returned only Tories for its county divisions, and even in most cases elected Tories to represent its boroughs. Eight Conservatives came in for the county of Lancaster, and among those whom their election displaced were no less eminent persons than Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington. Mr. Gladstone was defeated in Southwest Lancashire, but the result of the contest had been generally anticipated, and therefore some of his supporters put him up for Greenwich also and he was elected there. He had been passing step by step from less popular to more popular constituencies. From the University of Oxford he had passed to the Lancashire division, and now from the Lancashire constituency he went on to a place where the Liberal portion of the electors were inclined, for the most part, to be not merely Radical but democratic. The contest in North Lancashire was made more interesting than it would otherwise have been by the fact that it was not alone a struggle between opposing principles and parties, but also one between two great rival houses. Lord Hartington represented the great Cavendish family. Mr. Frederick Stanley was the younger son of Lord Derby. Lord Hartington was defeated by a large majority, and was left out of Parliament for a few months. He was afterwards elected for the Radnor Boroughs. Mr. Mill was defeated at Westminister. His defeat was brought about by a combination of causes. He had been elected in a moment of sudden enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm had now had time to cool away. He had given some offence in various quarters by a too great independence of action and of expression. On many questions of deep interest he had shown that he was entirely out of harmony with the views of the vast majority of his constituents, whatever their religi-

ous denomination might be. He had done some things which people called eccentric, and an English popular constituency does not love eccentricity. His opponent, Mr. W. H. Smith, was very popular in Westminster, and had been quietly canvassing it for years. Perhaps it may be hinted too that Mr. Mill's manly resolve not to pay any part of his election expenses did not contribute to make him a favourite candidate with a certain proportion of the constituency. He was known to be a generous and a charitable man. He gave largely out of his modest fortune towards any purpose which he thought deserving of support. But he disapproved of the principle of calling on a candidate to pay for permission to perform very onerous public duties, and he would not consent to recognise the principle by contributing anything towards the cost of his own candidature. This was against him in the mind of many. In every great constituency there is a certain proportion of voters who like the idea of a man's being liberal of his money in a contest, even though they do not expect to have any share of it. Some of the Westminster electors had probably grown tired of being represented by one who was called a philosopher. Some other prominent public men lost their seats. Mr. Roebuck was defeated in Sheffield. His defeat was partly due to the strong stand he had made against the trades unions; but still more to the bitterness of the hostility he had shown to the Northern States during the American Civil War. Mr. Milner Gibson and Mr. Bernal Osborne were also unseated. The latter got into Parliament again. The former disappeared from public life. He had done good service at one time as an ally of Cobden and Bright. Mr. Lowe was elected the first representative of the University of London, on which, as it will be remembered, the Conservative Reform Bill had conferred a seat. Mr. Disraeli afterwards

humorously claimed the credit of having enabled Mr. Lowe to carry on his public career by providing for him the only constituency in England which would have accepted him as its representative. One curious fact about the elections was that the extreme democratic candidates, and those who were called the working men's candidates, were in every instance rejected. This was the first general election with household suffrage in boroughs and a lowered franchise in counties. It might have been supposed that the votes of the working men, of "the people who live in those small houses" would have decided many a contest in favour of the candidates representing their cause or their class. But the candidates who appealed especially to working men failed in every instance to secure election. Mr. Ernest Jones, Mr. Beales, Mr. Mason Jones, Mr. Odger, Mr. Bradlaugh, tried and failed. Either our new masters were not so powerful as they were expected to prove, or they were very much like our old masters in their taste for representation. The new Parliament was to all appearance less marked in its Liberalism than that which had gone before it. But so far as mere numbers went the Liberal party was much stronger than it had been. In the new House of Commons it could count upon a majority of about 120, whereas in the late Parliament it had but 60. Mr. Gladstone it was clear would now have everything in his own hands, and the country might look for a career of energetic reform.

While the debates on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions were still going on there came to England the news that Lord Brougham was dead. He had died at Cannes in his ninetieth year. His death was a quiet passing away from a world that had well-nigh forgotten him. Seldom has a political career been so strangely cut short as that of Lord Brougham.

From the time when the Whig Administration was formed without him, he seemed to have no particular business in public life. He never had from that hour the slightest influence on any political party or any political movement. His restless figure was seen moving about the House of Lords like that of a man who felt himself out of place there, and was therefore out of humour with himself and his company. He often took part in debate, and for many years he continued to show all the fire and energy of his earlier days. But of late he had almost entirely dropped out of politics. Happily for him the Social Science Association was formed, and he acted for a long time as its principal guide, philosopher, and friend. He made speeches at its meetings, presided at many of its banquets, and sometimes showed that he could still command the resources of a massive eloquence. His social science had a curious air of unreality about it. It seemed as if it had been hastily put together out of that *Penny Cyclopædia* in which at one time he had so much concern. The men of the younger generation looked at him with interest and wonder; they found it hard to realise the fact that only a few years before he was one of the most conspicuous and energetic figures in political agitation. Now he seemed oddly like some dethroned king who occupies his leisure in botanical studies; some once famous commander, long out of harness, who amuses himself with learning the flute. There were perhaps some who forgot Brougham the great reformer altogether, and only thought of Brougham the patron and orator of the Social Science Association. He passed his time between Cannes, which he may be said to have discovered, and London. At one time he had had the idea of actually becoming a citizen of France, being of opinion that it would set a good example for the brotherhood of peoples if he were to show how a

man could be a French and an English citizen at the same moment. He had out-lived nearly all his early friends and foes. Melbourne, Grey, Durham, Campbell, Lyndhurst, had passed away. The death of Lyndhurst had been a great grief to him. It is said that in his failing, later years he often directed his coachman to drive him to Lord Lyndhurst's house, as if his old friend and gossip were still among the living. At last Brougham began to give unmistakable signs of vanishing intelligence. His appearances in public were mournful exhibitions. He sometimes sat at a dinner-party and talked loudly to himself of something which had no concern with the time, the place, or the company. His death created but a mere momentary thrill of emotion in England. He had made bitter enemies and cherished strong hatreds in his active years; and like all men who have strong hatreds, he had warm affections too. But the close friends and the bitter enemies were gone alike; had "passed like snow, long, long ago, with the time of the Barmecides;" and the agitation about the Irish Church was scarcely interrupted for a moment by the news of his death. Brougham's writings are not read now. No one turns to his speeches; those speeches that once set England aflame. His philosophy, his learning, his science, his Greek were all so curiously superficial, that it is no wonder if enemies sometimes declared them to be mere sham. As the memoirs of his contemporaries begin to be published we receive more and more evidence of the prodigious vanity which made Brougham believe that no one could do anything so well in any department as he could do everything in every department. The *Edinburgh Review* he appears to have regarded as a means by which he was to display the genius and acquirements, and others were to puff the speeches, of Henry Brougham. A strange sight

was seen one day at a meeting of the Social Science Association, when Lord Brougham, then on the eve of his complete intellectual decline, introduced to the company a man so old that he seemed to belong to an elder world altogether; a man with a wasted, wrinkled, wizard-like face, who wore a black silk skull-cap and a gaberdine. This was Robert Owen, and it was Owen's last appearance in public. He died a few days after in his ninetieth year. Brougham at that time was ten years younger, and he introduced Owen with all the respectful and almost filial carefulness which sturdy youth might show to sinking age. For the moment it would almost seem as if the self-conceit which made Brougham believe himself a great critic and a great Greek scholar, had made him also believe that for him time was nothing, and that he was still a young man.

END OF VOL. IV.

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